

The Blue Book

National Button Society



Classification

2013-2017

Section 3: China
Pages 30 and 31

30 National Button Society Classification for 2013-2017 Competition

base of the button. A **singleton** is made from a single slab of celluloid. Wafers may be flat, a bit convex or concave, have a rim, or be used as a foundation for dimensional embellishment of either celluloid or other material, i.e., **hors d'oeuvres**.

1-6.1 Two or more layers. Laminated or built-up wafers created by layering two or more slices of celluloid. These are often cut to show the different color layers.

1-7 Unlisted. Ivoryine is a term used to describe celluloid made to imitate the look of smooth ivory. Most are wafers, but some tight tops are found. These buttons have a smooth surface, sometimes showing a grain, and are usually incised or engraved with pigment added. They may have metal, metal escutcheons or lithograph centers as embellishment.

SECTION 2 - CERAMICS

2-0 Ceramics assorted. Ceramic is a general descriptive term that includes a wide range of fired natural clay bodies. China buttons are accepted *here (as a type of ceramic) in Unlisted. They are the focus of Sec. 3 (China).*

2-1 Earthenware assorted. All types of porous clay (pottery), glazed and/or unglazed. Clay may be white, cream, buff, yellow or brown to dark red (terracotta). Examples are Ruskin, Barum, Norwalk, Delft, Zia, etc.

2-2 Porcelain assorted. Includes all white, nonporous hard paste and opaque soft paste ceramic ware. Examples are Kutani, Arita, Meissen, etc.

2-4 Stoneware. Hard, non-porous clay, glazed or unglazed (bisque). Includes jasperware and Wedgwood.

2-5 Back marks. Includes both stamped and transferred types.

2-6 Decorative finishes (DF). Includes hand painted design, transfer (with or without additional paint embellishment), decorative glaze, etc. Refer to page 66.

SECTION 3 - CHINA

3-0 China assorted. Chinas are utilitarian buttons with distinctive body styles and designs. Guidelines for Collecting China Buttons (Guidelines) categorized all known china buttons at the time of its publication and is the main source of detailed information on these buttons. Information on additional body styles, colors, and formulation has emerged post publication. There is evidence that some button manufacturers utilized glass as well as ceramic formulas, and “china type” buttons were manufactured in both materials. These previously undocumented buttons share some china characteristics, such as design, pattern, back type, or body style with the originals. This section offers a basic framework to classify these buttons, including the later examples. Reference to the Guidelines publication, is recommended for more detailed information on terminology and definitions as this outline is based on it. *Refer to the May 2007 NBS Bulletin.* China awards are best written in Div. IX. Benefit of the doubt is recommended for buttons showing typical china characteristics.

3-1 Back types assorted. All back types, including molded self shank. The asterisk (*) designates back types categorized as complex construction in the Guidelines. This category includes any china button with a metal shank or a shank attachment comprised of a piece distinct from the face/body of the button. Simple molded sew-throughs are not complex construction.

3-1.1 *Inserted self shank (including bird cage). Made of 2 or 3 separate pieces, the inserted back piece forms the shank portion of the button.

3-1.2 *Metal shank. Includes plain inserted metal shanks, pin-shanks, and plate and loop shanks (shoe, smock, gaiters). Gaiters are characterized by a solid chunky body in a variety of molded shapes, commonly having a metal plate and loop shank.

3-1.3.2 Two-hole. *Igloos (considered complex construction) are included here since the hump on top of the button is not a shank, but simply forms a tunnel

for the thread.

3-1.3.3 *Whistle. Refer to page 54 for definition. Most china whistles are constructed of 2 separate pieces fitted together and therefore are complex construction.

3-2 Body styles assorted. This class separates china buttons according to basic body style as defined and named in the Guidelines. It includes those listed there as well as newer undocumented types. Award may specify a single body style (listed or not) such as hobnails, or an assortment of more than one type, such as radiating line rims and pattern eyes.

3-2.1 Hollow eye. A sew-through button characterized by 2 holes contained in a circular hollow sewing well

3-2.2 Oval eye. A sew-through with 2 holes set within an oval depression having either boxed or rounded ends.

3-2.3 Smooth beveled rim. A sew-through button characterized by a slightly concave center and a smooth beveled or sloping rim. Includes dish and ink well styles.

3-3 Colors assorted. Includes color coming from the body/base, or from a surface decoration applied onto that base. Awards may specify colors(s) of focus which may come from either the body and/or the decoration. Any amount of a specified color qualifies the button. Other colors may also be present unless excluded by the award, as are shades and tints of a specified color. Metal OME, (e.g. rim), pin-shank, or mounting (china jewel) is allowed.

3-3.1 Body/base color. Emphasis is on the body/base color which is uniform and comes from the clay body itself or luster or opaque glaze/paint completely covering the surface. A plain white bodied china is white; a white bodied china with applied marigold luster is considered orange. Contrasting decorations not allowed. White and cream are not considered the same color. Award may specify color(s) of focus.

3-3.2 Surface decoration color. Emphasis is on the surface decoration color only and may come from paint, stencil, transfer, or a partial luster, etc. forming a design (dot, band, pattern, etc.). Separate inserted centers of a contrasting color are treated as a surface decoration. A button may have more than one surface decoration color. Mottled (color variation throughout the body), and marbled (an all-over finish similar to mottled) are appropriate here. Award may specify color(s) of focus.

3-4 Decorative designs, finishes assorted. Emphasis is on the surface design or finish. These may come from paint, stenciling, transfer, or luster, and includes multiple colors or techniques. Includes designs such as gingham (china buttons decorated with a surface design imitating boldly patterned fabric) and finishes such as marbling, as well as those listed.

3-4.1 Banded. Decorated with a continuous line circling the surface or edge.
Bull's-eye. Dome-shaped gaiters decorated with a contrasting central dot, with or without additional bands or border.

3-4.2 Calico. A china button decorated with a repeating design, typically of a floral or geometric nature, over the entire surface of the button.

3-4.3 Lusters. Includes white (pearl), all lusters, opaque and translucent, metallic or not.

3-4.4 Stencil. Two-hole china button, typically white or cream colored, decorated with a single motif of a contrasting color.

3-5 Unlisted. Includes rare mounted in metal types such as china “jewels” and drums with china centers. Also includes rimmed (with metal OME) chinas.

SECTION 4 - ENAMELS

4-0 Enamels assorted. **Enamel** (not to be confused with paint) is a decorative finish (DF) of glass fired onto metal. In this section the enamel is the focus. Buttons with metal as the focus with enamel finish or borders are appropriate in