Interesting lettering and symbols on thimbles

including thimbles with cryptic pictorial messages

Are you fascinated by various lettering – not the hallmarks nor the maker's marks – but something more specific - on your thimbles? Sometimes it is lettering of a commemorative or an historic event, others just inscribed with some unusual words or symbols. None of the following thimbles fall into any previous *Learn More About…Thimbles* topics: not advertisements, slogans, scenic, placenames, patents, brands etc. Some of the lettering is on an applied badge – probably done at the time of the commission?

It is as broad as thimble collecting but the occasion for the lettering or words or symbols is largely unknown: all eras (but largely ignoring contemporary thimbles), all countries and different materials are included, concentrating on the unusual. Who made some of the thimbles – for which occasion, tho some are self-explanatory – were they one-offs or made for commercial purposes? If they are of sterling, we usually know the maker.
I will remove the thimble if it becomes part of a new topic.

Quite a few have military connections, many from World War I. I have found a few examples of war propaganda thimbles, and I have included them here, having no other place for them.

I don't believe these are jeweller's inscriptions or monograms added after manufacture, in a cartouche.

I first encountered many of these thimbles in the *Thimble Society of London* catalogues. Most are rare and very few examples have been encountered: so well worth recording for posterity? I have combed Gay Ann Rogers, Edwin Holmes and John von Hoelle's thimble books for any clues. Those books date from the 1980s and our knowledge has moved on.

I would love for this topic to become a repository of oddities, mystery thimbles – the more cryptic the lettering, the better.

Some are included here just to record them as they are rare. They are made of sterling silver, gold, brass, steel, copper and aluminium, even a few china and plastic.

In 2022 I added a section at the end: thimbles from 18th and 19th century that have pictorial or 'cryptic' messages around the band in the form of everyday objects. One day the meaning of these messages may become apparent, so recorded here for that time.

see also: *Who made these named thimbles* topic

The listing is in alphabetical order of the lettering.

ЗТЪ ЕВРЕЙчЕТА СОФИЯ



brass
red rubbed off band
Bulgarian: Na Sofiiskite Evrei - English: To the Hebrews of Sofia
with Star of David
Germany
1890s-1910s

4 - H CLOTHING 1949 and "4 - H CLOTHING 1983" and "4 - H CLOTHING, 1984"





Simons Philadelphia
award winners' thimbles
top L: sterling silver with gilt band
bottom R: unknown year

5 MEI 1945-1985



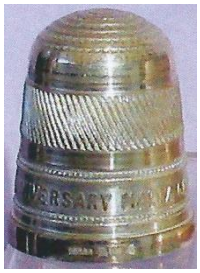
Pako Netherlands
applied symbol of dove of peace on flag colours of Netherlands

21



Simons Philadelphia
sterling silver
Seattle World Fair 1962

50th ANNIVERSARY MALTA GEORGE CROSS



James Swann & Son Birmingham

250 YEARS HANDEL'S MESSIAH 1743-1993



James Swann & Son Birmingham 1993
maker's marks are lettered in the apex so had been missed

1889 PARIS



Alfred Féau France
800 silver

1889 PARIS-EXPOSITION/1889 EXPOSITION



Alfred Féau France
800 silver



Roger Lenain France
800 silver
marked FRANCE with size #9 1970s reissue
Beryl Frank: In the 1970s Roz Belford, an astute retailer of thimbles … discovered that Lenain had stored the original dies for their thimbles … Some of these thimbles were reissued for export to the United States. … The size is marked on the thimble … If FRANCE is stamped on the thimble, it was made in the 1970s."

this reissue uses hyphens to separate the words – using the longer phrase



1900 PARIS



Alfred Féau France
800 silver



Roger Lenain France
800 silver
marked FRANCE with size #9 1970s reissue
Beryl Frank: In the 1970s Roz Belford, an astute retailer of thimbles … discovered that Lenain had stored the original dies for their thimbles … Some of these thimbles were reissued for export to the United States. … The size is marked on the thimble … If FRANCE is stamped on the thimble, it was made in the 1970s."

1900 PARIS EXPOSITION



Alfred Féau France
800 silver

1914



Charles Horner Chester 1913/1914
World War I thimble with a disc with an applied enamelled disc with a Red Cross symbol

1914 + Iron Cross



R: Gabler Germany
800 silver
World War I thimble with a 1914 Iron Cross on the wide band
crown and 'W' lettered above 1914
L: stone in apex – R: applied Iron Cross within indentations

1914 LYON EXPOSITION



Roger Lenain France
800 silver



Roger Lenain France
marked FRANCE with size #9 1970s reissue
Beryl Frank "In the 1970s Roz Belford, an astute retailer of thimbles … discovered that Lenain had carefully stored the original dies for their thimbles … Some of these thimbles were reissued for export to the United States. … The size is marked on the thimble … If FRANCE is stamped on the thimble, it was made in the 1970s." The original apex is flatter than the original 1914 issue.

1914-1915 ARANYAT VASÉRT









Settmacher Vienna Austria
aluminium
Hungarian lettering for 'Jewellery for iron'
which was the WW1 appeal for money for munitions from the populace
painted "stones" are original on blue band version –green one was made with no coloured stones
(see Groiss on Settmacher - p59)

1914 + 1915 + 1916



probably Gabler Germany
iron or steel
World War I thimble but what significance are the three dates
do the crosses have significance?

1914 16



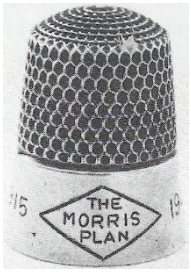
Roger Lenain (?) France
gilt sterling silver
Isbister names this thimble as "Les filles filant" (Girls spinning)
unusual as there are two dates lettered within the pictorial

1914/16



Gabler Germany
800 enamelled silver
stone apex
includes Iron Cross

1915 THE MORRIS PLAN 1940



Simons Philadelphia
sterling silver
lettering within diamond-shape with dates alongside
1940s

1915 - 1919



tho I can't see the maker's marks this appears to be made by Henry Griffith & Sons
sterling silver
I feel these dates were placed at time of manufacture

1978



Monika Fald Germany
gilt sterling silver
replica of Kutch India Raj sterling silver thimble

1995 WIEDERAUFBAU FRAUENKIRCHE DRESDEN



Thorvald Greif Germany
925
commemorating the reconstruction of the Dresden Frauenkirche with applied rebuilt church, 1995 copper attachment on the side represents the ruins of the church 1945, which is placed next to images of bombed ruins – '13.-14.2.45' is lettered vertically on thimble along one side of copper

2000



Simons Philadelphia
sterling

2000 NEW YEAR NEUJAHR



Settmacher Austria
aluminium
Settmacher closed in Vienna in 2005

2000 YEAR



James Swann & Sons Birmingham
sterling silver
Space Hubble computer – International Space Station

2004-2014 Schiller's 200 Jahre Wilh.Tell



Julius Wengert Pzorzheim Germany
sterling silver
limited to **100**

(A Gentleman in Khaki)



Henry Griffith & Sons Ltd Birmingham 1899
created during the Boer War being waged between Britain and South Africa

A MEMORIAL OF QUEEN CAROLINE OB^{T} AUG^{T} 7 1821 AG^{D} 53



sterling silver
wide band with royal symbols (thistle and clover) on the verso
it is interesting that this thimble mentions 'obituary' (OB^{T})
she was Queen Caroline of Brunswick, wife of George IV

A MERRY X-MAS



sterling silver with shadow gothic lettering on textured ground
unknown USA maker whose mark is a small crown
1900s
H Muhr's Sons produced a similar thimble

A STITCH FOR THE RED WHITE & BLUE



G W Hatton & Co Chester 1914
enamelled bands in the order of the lettering - red at the top of the band
band lettering is not coloured



G W Hatton Chester 1914
also, with a Chester 1918 assay mark
blue lettering with an added full stop
enamelled bands



G W Hatton & Co Chester 1914
enamelled bands



sterling silver with enamelled bands
similar to above but lettering is not coloured
and not hallmarked



similar thimbles with no lettering were produced to commemorate coronation of Edward VIII, which never took place Chester 1936
L: the enamelling is worn
C: Charles Horner Chester 1936
b&w photo

order of the colour of the bands is reversed with the blue at the top of the band
R: Charles Horner Chester 1936



applied worn coat-of-arms

A stitch in time



synthetic material
'A stitch in time'
TTG August 1987



James Swann & Sons Birmingham 1990



Halcyon Days England



commissioned by Thimble Society of London 1985

A stitch in time saves nine



James (Hagop) Demirjian California
sterling silver

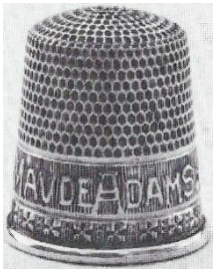


Simons Philadelphia
sterling silver
1900s



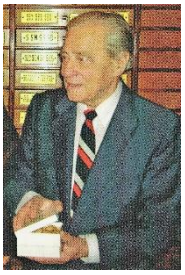
SJH
with stitches

A THIMBLE FROM MAUDE ADAMS



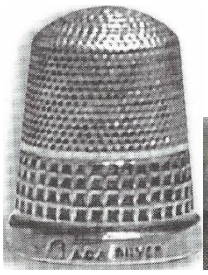
Simons Philadelphia
sterling silver
c.1906
commissioned by Adams (1872-1953) to commemorate her starring role in 'Peter Pan' in New York, where Wendy gives Peter Pan a thimble as a kiss

A.C. ILLUM KYINDERNES BYGNING

Settmacher Vienna Austria
tombac
Illum (1863-1938) was a Danish businessman and store owner. His wife raised money for the Women's Society by selling thimbles thru the family business
shows Women's Building, Copenhagen
1930s

A.O.A SILVER




the extra mark seems to be a size mark

ADAM RIESE 1x1 RECHNEN



Thorvald Greif Germany
925
commemorating the 450th anniversary of 1500 master calculator and accountant, 2000
blue glass apex and open work with Roman numerals of dates, as part of the design

AJOS



James Swann Birmingham 1917 1918 1922
lettering is always contained in this scrolled lozenge
mark has appeared on several James Swann thimbles with different patterns

AMERICAN RED CROSS HUMANITY NEUTRALITY



aluminium with a red-painted band – including the Red Cross symbol
I understand these thimbles were made during WWII
volunteers and members of the Red Cross prepared sewing kits, which were sent to the military in the USA and overseas
surplus supplies were used in one instance post-war by a schoolteacher to teach her first- grade students to add and subtract (eBay March 2019)

AOPA

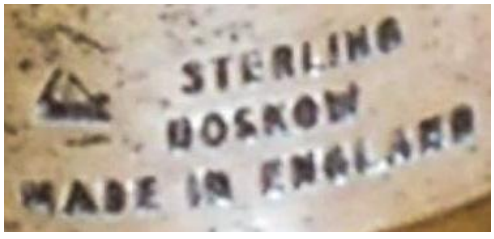


Ketcham & McDougall New York
sterling silver
enamelled badge has 'wings'
AOPA lettered across the centre – for Aircraft Owners & Pilots Association

ARB ... and others



monograms: AMY - CAF – DAS – DAW – EFG - JAW – JJB - JSH – KDK – LRL – MEK - MGG – MOM with hearts in centres of Ms





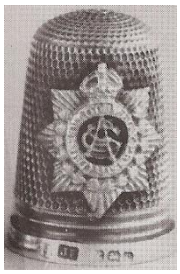
Leonore Doskow New York
sterling silver
chunky distinctive applied block lettering on the bands
marked 'Sterling Doskow Made in England' with a maker's mark on the verso
the mark is an L with a D superimposed on it, in a triangle
made in England by James Swann & Son, they bear the mark of Leonore Doskow
who worked out of Montrose NY USA - she designed and finished the thimbles





this Doskow creation with initials of **BCH**, lettered is cursive – is probably just a monogram
thimble forms part of sewing kit, and all have a smooth surface – tape measure, kit and thimble all bear the same monogram + .925

ASC



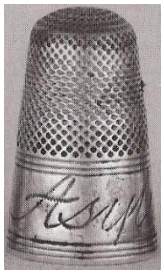
James Fenton Birmingham 1914
for Army Service Corp.
used for supplying the army with all supplies
applied badge has the *ASC* monogram in the centre

Association of the Inner Wheel Club of Great Britain and Ireland



James Swann & Son Birmingham
for Rotary, with their logo – R applied logo
1983

Asylum 1808



interesting, dated Georgian thimble has cursive lettering
steel-topped sterling silver

ATLANTA '95



Simons Philadelphia
sterling silver

BATTLE OF PLATTSBURGH SEPT 1814 LAKE CHAMPLAIN



Ketcham & McDougall New York
sterling silver
PAT'D
commemorating the centenary of the battle
ich then forms one thimble

BETSY ROSS



Joe Turner Jewelry Works Studio Coeur d'Alene
sterling silver

BORN 1564 DIED 1616



Shakespeare's bust in relief
steel-topped silver
c. 1776

BENZ 1844-1929



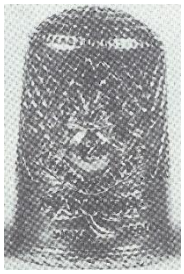
Thorvald Greif Germany
925
commemorating 80 years of Carl Benz 2009

CC 1492-1992



Thorvald Greif Germany
925
commemorating 500 years of Christopher Columbus

CANADA



Birks
sterling silver
applied unknown military insignia
for World War I

CAROLINE QUEEN OF (rose thistle shamrock pictorials)





sterling silver
c.1820

CENTURY OF PROGRESS CHICAGO 1934



brass
World's Fair commemorative

(clasped hands)



sterling silver – pre 1880s
clasped hands – with pansy, carnation and oak leaves

CLEAN HANDS FOR NEEDLEWORK



aluminium
so well used even the 'glass' top has popped out
neither a slogan nor an advertising thimble

CLEVELAND 1940 K.I.O.



Simons Philadelphia
sterling silver
K.I.O stands for Kentucky Indiana Ohio
commemorating the annual bowling tournament for Union Printers
the tournament was held in Ohio in 1940
(my thanks to Thimblestuff for this research)

CORKY 1-29-63



Leonore Doskow New York
sterling silver
made in England by James Swann & Son, they bear the mark of Leonore Doskow
enamel portrait in set-in circular disc of dog

"CORONET"



brass
L: "Coronet" England
R: "Coronet" with 'Trade Mark' with a crown or coronet in between on verso

(crown)



Henry Williamson Ltd Birmingham 1900

(crown) **M. 1939**



Charles Iles Birmingham
tailor's brass-lined steel
marked for the Air Ministry as official property of the Royal Air Force,
commonly found in their Maintenance Units where they were used in the repair of parachutes, barrage balloons etc and also issued with airman's hussifs (Eileen Saunders 1991)
WD would be for the army ie War Department
RN would be for the Royal Navy

ΚΔ (Delta Kappa)



Simons Philadelphia
sterling silver
fraternity thimble
see also: ΠβΦ (Pi beta Phi)

E.S.A - LONDON



brass
Educational Supplies Association, London
probably made by Charles Iles of Birmingham
were they issued to schools?

ELECTION



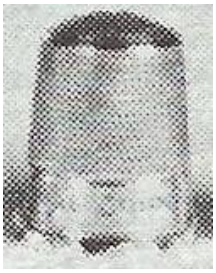
Arthur Witting Birmingham 1927/1928/1929/1930/1931/1932
probably made by Henry Griffith & Sons as the sunburst patterning is peculiar to HG&S
Edwin Holmes in his *Thimble Notes and Queries* of winter 1989 … "In Britain the term is unthinkable (in the political sense). In the sense of 'choice' it is evidently a brand name …
the dates are not all for election years which at the time were in 1931."

ELIXABETH HILSON HELP HOPEFUL SOROFUL HARTES



silver
16th century personalised thimble
apex missing
housed in the British Museum
unusual spelling of her first name

ESSEX GIRL GUIDES



I am fascinated by the supposed hallmark for this thimble – 1949
was this produced as a fundraiser?

EXCELSIOR



Iles & Gomms Birmingham
Brass
see also: Gregorita, Jesuesito, Josefina, Regina

'Exposition Paris 1937'





Settmacher Vienna Austria
brass - silverplate
L: 'Austria' stamped in indentation
R: blue apex

FECMU



sterling silver
applied badge is for the qualities of
Faith **E**ndurance **C**ourage **M**odesty **U**nselfishness
of the Royal Neighbors of America

FEDERATION CENTENARY 1901 to 2001



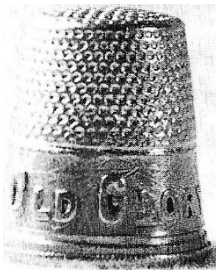
Curtis Hine North Balwyn Melbourne
sterling silver
handmade
limited to **10**

F-H-A



Simons Philadelphia
sterling silver
for Future Homemakers of America
L: 1940s
R: applied logo Ray Nimmo 21st C

FIGHT FOR OLD GLORY



(fleur de lis)



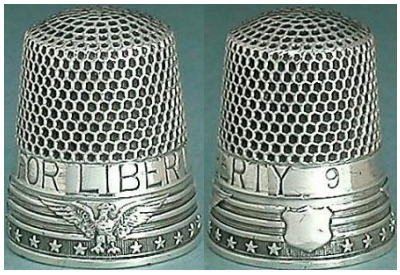
Lotthammer-Eber (six petalled mark) Pforzheim Germany
made for the Italian market
900 silver
R: Lotthammer-Eber mark has been over stamped with Florence's Piliti & Schreyer mark

FLOOD



Goldsmith Stern & Co New York
sterling silver

FOR LIBERTY



Ketcham & McDougall New York
sterling silver
1917

FOR VALOUR



copper with applied Military Cross
1930s

FRIENDS WAR RELIEF SERVICE

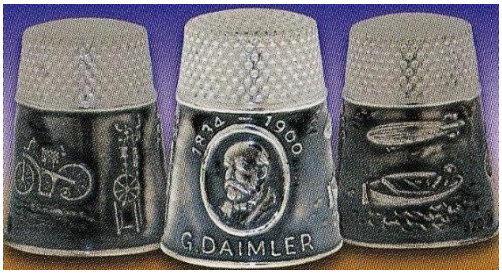






Ketcham & McDougall New York
also made by Simons Philadelphia
sterling silver
'Friends' would have applied to Quakers who were active in war zones as conscientious objectors
first set up at the start of Franco-Prussian war and revived at start of WW1
applied enamelled disc
1900s

G. DAIMLER 1834-1900





Thorvald Greif Germany
925
175th anniversary of Gottlieb Daimler 2009

G. King – G. K … – K …



sterling silver
Georgian trio
three similar thimbles with intriguing lettering
two of the thimbles have their lettering upside down to face the sewer when sewing

GFS



Charles Horner Chester 1920
applied badge
Girls' Friendly Society

GOLDSCHMIEDHAUS HANAU 1979



Monika Fald Germany

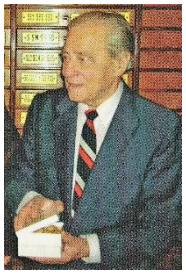
GOTT MIT UNS 1914



Germany
L: brass – C: silver with stone in place of damaged silver apex
propaganda thimble: God with us

GOTT STRAFE ENGLAND





Settmacher Vienna Austria
aluminium
propaganda thimble: God punish England
green, red and black bands were available

GOTT STRAFE ITALIEN





Settmacher Vienna Austria
aluminium
b&w photo

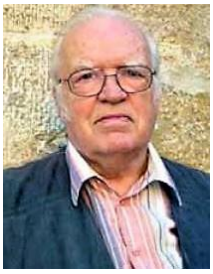
GRAND NATIONAL JUBILEE

no photo

metal
for King George III
heads of the King and Queen

GREAT BRITAIN 50 KM FRANCE MAI 1994 26000DM





Thorvald Greif Germany
enamelled 925
commemorating opening of the Chunnel

GREENWICH 2000



James Swann & Sons Birmingham

GREGORITA



Charles Iles Birmingham
brass tailor's - with sprigs before and after lettering
see also: Excelsior, Jesuesito, Josefina, Regina

GS



Ketcham & McDougall New York
sterling silver
for Girl Scouts
applied green enamelled badge
1880s

GUERNSEY



James Swann & Son Birmingham
Guernsey lettered diagonally on applied map of Guernsey

HANS SACHS 5. NOV. 1494-1994 500



Thorvald Greif Germany
brass
commemorating 500-year anniversary of this German poet and playwright

HAPPY CHILD UNHAPPY CHILD



pre-1884 sterling silver
lettering around rim with accompanying applied scenes around the band

HEIL UND SIEG



Settmacher Vienna Austria
aluminium
propaganda thimble: Health and victory

"HER MAJESTY" THIMBLE



Charles Iles Birmingham
This thimble had long been associated with Queen Victoria. This is not so
There were many commemorative thimbles made for the 1897 Jubilee
It may be an advertising thimble, but what is it advertising?
Additional lettering has "ENGLAND" below the larger lettering

HERMÉS



France
sterling silver, with boar's head mark
is this (upside-down) lettering an advertising thimble – or the maker – or a prize for a designer working for the fashion label?

HEROES OF THE CRIMEA



Charles Iles Birmingham
brass

HIGHGROVE




James Swann & Son Birmingham
Highgrove House in Gloucestershire, home of King Charles III
presumably made as a souvenir for the when he was Prince of Wales
smooth apex

HONOUR THE BRAVE



Charles Iles Birmingham
brass

H.W.SILVO / SILVO



sterling silver
all over blackberry patterning
is this lettering an advertising thimble – or the maker's mark?
with appearance of the thimble at R, maybe H.W is the maker

ICH KENNE KEINE PARTEIEN MEHR NUR DEUTSCHE 4-8-1914



Germany
brass
translated: I just don't know any parties any more
quote by Kaiser Bill an tne outbreak of World War I

I LEFT MY HEART IN SAN FRANSISCO



IHn



Ketcham & McDougall New York
aluminium
applied swastika symbols

IHS



Swann Thimbles Birmingham 1992
made for The Thimble Guild
communion chalice with IHS in roundel above
IHS = first three letters in Greek for 'Jesus'
grapes to L represent wine – corn represents bread
limited to **250**

ILES ALURINE



Charles Iles Birmingham

ILES COMFORT THIMBLE



Charles Iles Birmingham
nickel silver

ILES PATENT



Charles Iles Birmingham
brass
unusual, beaded rim – vitreous lining

ILES TAILOR



silverplated
as this isn't open-ended like other tailor's thimbles, this name is a mystery

In stitches



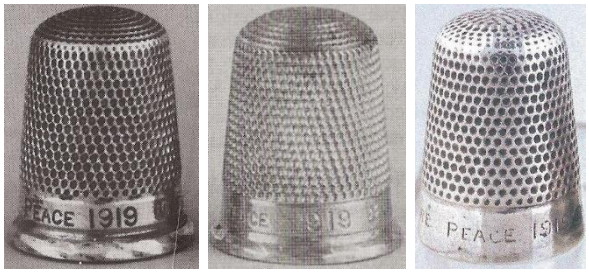
silver

(Ionian Islands)



sterling silver
made for the British Exhibition 1851
with seven symbols around the band

INFANT WELFARE PEACE 1919



James Fenton Birmingham 1918
lettering on raised narrow band
three slightly differently shaped thimbles

JESUESITO

no photo

brass
double row of scrolls before and after lettering
see also: Excelsior, Gregorita, Josefina, Regina

JOSEFINA

no photo

brass
double row of scrolls before and after lettering
see also: Excelsior, Gregorita, Jesuesito, Regina

JUSTICE





James Swann & Son Birmingham 1948

KING AND CONSTITUTION

no photo

metal
for King George III
royal cypher (GIIIR) with crown above
celebrating the King's 50th anniversary 1809

KRUPP'S FLEISSIGE BERTA 42



nickname of German 42cm mortars used during WWI

LEAVITT



Simons Philadelphia
sterling silver
band lettering of this name is vertical to the rim

LEMBRANCA



brass
memento or souvenir - Portuguese

(Lincoln Imp) and **The Lincoln Imp**





sterling silver – unknown maker 1892
pewter
James Ward Usher, a Lincoln jeweller and silversmith, registered the Lincoln Imp, when he obtained the sole rights to use the Lincoln Imp in 1892

Learn More About Interesting lettering on thimbles

it was modelled on a stone imp high on the walls of Lincoln Cathedral
this is a RARE thimble
top R: Ray Nimmo Birmingham 2015
lower: pewter where the imp can be moved up and down, showing inner mechanism

L.C.C.



Charles Iles Birmingham
brass
for London County Council
and probably issued to schools?
interesting star mark on apex – blue vitreous lining

LONG LIVE KING W$^{M.}$ IV



L: brass – R: sterling Z
William IV reigned 1830-1837
Is this the earliest British royal commemorative?

LONG LIVE Q$^{N.}$ ADELAIDE



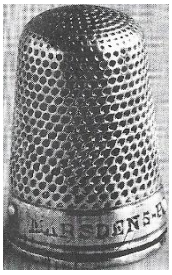
brass
Adelaide married William IV in 1818. They ascended to the throne in 1830

LOT.No A



brass with Birmingham anchor mark
sturdy tailor's thimble with strong indentations

MARSDENS PATENT



silver
first thimble patent granted on 12 May 1850 - to Charles Marsden (#13341)
ventilated thimble

MARTIN & SON



Charles Iles Birmingham
brass-lined steel
is this an advertising thimble?
World War I

MARTIN LUTHER 15.10.n.1487-15.2.1543





Thorvald Greif Germany
925
five dated panels, 1517 1521 1546 1555, commemorating life of Luther 1996
(see inner view)
first recorded by Di Pelham Burn (1993)

Medical Corps for RAF Doctors



James Fenton Birmingham 1938
applied badge has medical symbol with a crown at the top as part of the design

MOZART





Thorvald Greif Germany
925
commemorating 250th anniversary of his birth 2006

NAFALAN



USA

NATIONAL SILVEROID



Charles Iles Birmingham
made for Hitchinson & Co Ltd (Legge Lane, Birmingham)

NDR



Simons Philadelphia
sterling silver
Nancy Reagan with White House in relief

NEQG



Simons Philadelphia
sterling silver
National Quality Equity Fund

NICKEL



Charles Iles Birmingham
W indicates it was made for Woolworths

NICKEL SILVER



Charles Iles Birmingham

NICKEL SILVER. STERLING SILVER PLATED



a bit of a mixed message?
Woolworths & Co

N'OUBLIONS JAMAIS 1914



Lenain France
800 silver
some examples have an ornate rim



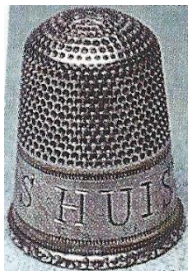
Lenain France
800 silver
marked FRANCE with size #9 1975 reissue
Beryl Frank "In the 1970s Roz Belford, an astute retailer of thimbles … discovered that Lenain had carefully stored the original dies for their thimbles … Some of these thimbles were reissued for export to the United States. … The size is marked on the thimble … If FRANCE is stamped on the thimble, it was made in the 1970s."
The reissue wording ends with an exclamation mark.

NUR DEUTSCHE KEINE PARTEIEN 4.AUG.1914



Germany
brass
translated: I just don't know any parties any more
quote by Kaiser Bill an tne outbreak of World War I

ONS HUIS



Gabler Germany
Dutch lettering meaning Our House
1900s

PATENT



Charles Iles Birmingham
zinc lining with 'jewel' in apex
Patent no 22397 1895

PATENT ENAMEL



Charles Iles Birmingham
brass-lined steel
is this an advertising thimble?
maybe any enamelling has worn off?
World War I
other examples exist in brass

(Peace)



Henry Griffith & Sons Birmingham 1919
gilt-lined
applied peace emblem with a crown
according to Dorothy Friend (*TCI Bulletin* January 1988) this is the brass insignia for the Royal Artillery

PEPPER



Horace Woodward & Co Birmingham 1888
made in the shape to use as a pepper shaker, with specific holes in apex
it has a diamond-shaped registration mark

PETER PAN REGD



L: Henry Fidkin Birmingham 1918 – R: CU Birmingham 1918
Fidkin would have made the thimbles for the sponsor Charles Usher of Leicester
it is still a mystery what this lettering is for – it could be promotional, but it isn't advertising a specific product

ΠβΦ (Pi beta Phi)



Goldsmith-Stern & Co New York
panelled sterling silver
sorority thimble
see also: ΚΔ (Delta Kappa)

PIONEER WOMAN



Ketcham & McDougall New York
sterling silver
applied memorial

PRINCESS ROYAL



Charles Iles Birmingham
brass

P.S. BISHOP PAT.SEPT.20.1859



Peter S Bishop of Smithfield RI, an American inventor and manufacturer, patented his thimble #25482 for silver-clad thimbles

RAF



Felix Morel Bath
blue enamelled brass with sterling silver RAF wings attached

REAL GERMAN SILVER



Charles Iles Birmingham
none of Iles thimbles are made of silver – they are nickel silver

(Red Cross)



Simons Philadelphia
sterling silver
applied enamelled cross

REGINA



Charles Iles Birmingham
brass tailor's - with sprigs before and after lettering
see also: Excelsior, Gregorita, Jesuesito, Josefina, Regina

RH





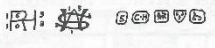
Charles Horner Chester 1919
what a puzzle this lettering is! RH with numerals –
(ignore the RH graphic above of 1919 – a typo – should read 1918)
lower: a date '1918' + '60' - on a wider band
there is then the intertwined WS or SW capped by more numerals on the verso
that isn't meant as a monogram?
I recently encountered a query from a German member in a 1986 *TCI Bulletin*, asking about this thimble - "It seems that these marks were pressed during the production of the thimble, not later … Perhaps it is for a firm's name or an anniversary date?"
no-one ever attempted an answer
and now - late in 2020 – a thimble discovery with almost identical markings -
by James Fenton
there has been a suggestion that this is an anniversary date
the date could be 19 January (numerals from the monogram) and the date is 60 years in 1918 (so 1858)
they could have been privately engraved using plain thimbles …



James Fenton Birmingham 1918



Q3: This year we bought in England a quite normal silver thimble with a plain band. The hallmark is Chester, 1919; the maker, Charles Horner. But this thimble bears two more unusual marks. It seems that these marks were pressed too during the production of the thimble, not later.



Perhaps it stands for a firm name or an anniversary date? Can anyone help?
--C. Sommerkorn, West Germany

ROBERT F KENNEDY WE MOURN OUR LOSS 1925-1968



USA
plastic

ROYAL ENGINEERS



James Fenton Birmingham 1939
George V cypher (the monarch is their Commander-in-Chief)
RE's motto: Honi soit qui mal y pense

SCHWARZ-GELBES KREUZ 1914



aluminium
promoting an Austrian aid organisation for war invalids and their families, which started on 31 August 1914
notice the depiction of the medal pressed into the thimble
available with black or yellow band

SIEG HEIL 1914



900 silver
stamped D.R.G.M.

SILVER. STERLING



Charles Iles Birmingham

SOUVENIR



Charles Iles Birmingham
brass
with sprigs before and after lettering

SOUVENIR ST LOUIS EXPOSITION 1904



Iles & Gomms Birmingham
nickel silver

SOUVENIR ST. LOUIS EXPOSITION 1904



metal

(St Hubert)



French sterling silver
stag with three shamrocks affixed on band

St Peter's Band of Hope. July 1918



MAA Birmingham 1917

STÄDTISCHES MUSEUM SCHWÄBISCH GMÜND 1979



Monika Falk Germany

STER[G] SILVER



STIRLING SILVER



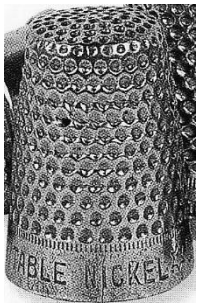
mid-Victorian sterling silver with steel apex
interesting spelling

(swastika)




Waite Thresher USA
sterling silver with applied swastika L: child's size
1890s

TABLE NICKEL



TAYLOR'S NEW YORK 1939 WORLD'S FAIR



Taylor's Pork Roll was first available at the 1939 World's Fair
aluminium advertising with blue band

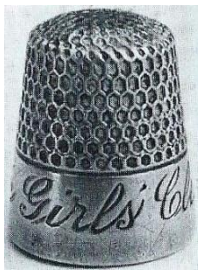
TAYLOR'S NON-SLIP PATENT



Charles Iles Birmingham
brass

"THE GIRLS' CLUB"





Webster USA
sterling silver
lettering includes a swastika
thimble would have been made before World War II
two different forms of lettering

THE INNER WHEEL



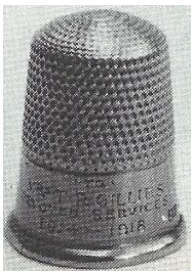
James Swann & Son Birmingham
enamelled sterling silver
The Inner Wheel is for women in Rotary Services Clubs

TO JEAN FROM THE LANTERN THEATRE



James Swann & Son Birmingham 1983
who is Jean?
Lantern Theatre is in Sheffield in England

TO MRS T.R.GILLIES DEVOTED SERVICES 1914-1918



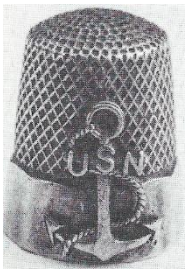
9ct gold
Gordon Highlanders emblem on the verso
b&w photo

U· S ·1



Simons Philadelphia
14ct gold
doesn't look like a cartouche

U S N



Simons Philadelphia
10-panelled sterling silver
applied anchor with USN
1940s

VICTORIA G.G, 1230



Gabler Germany
aluminium
reeded rim
what intriguing wording
lettering almost looks like a London phone number from 1920s

VOTE IN 1989



lacquered brass
Settmacher Vienna Austria
decorated in USA

VROUWENKIESRECHT



brass
reeded rim
Dutch: Women's suffrage

WAR CHEST FUND



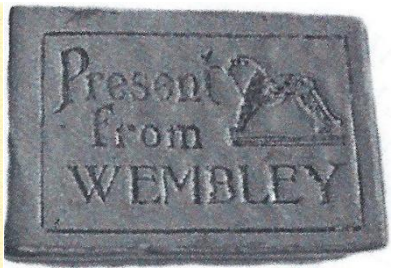
Charles Iles Birmingham
ivorine
During the 1914-1918 war 13,000 white ivorine thimbles were donated by Mrs Ninian Thomson to the War Chest Thimble Fund in New South Wales to raise funds for comforts for the Australian men fighting in Europe during World War I

WEMBLEY 1924 (1925)

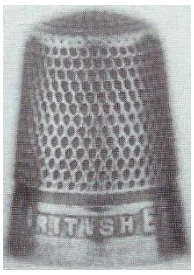






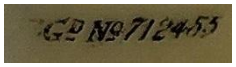



Henry Griffith & Sons Birmingham 1924
the lion was the symbol of the 1924 British Empire Exhibition
as shown on the commemorative postage stamps
thimble box lettered 'Present from Wembley' with identical lion as on thimble




different thimbles from Charles Iles
nickel-plated and brass versions lettered BRITISH EMPIRE EXHIBITION





Arcadian China
British Empire Exhibition Wembley 1925
RED^{G} N^{o}712455

Where did I get this ?



base metal with brass band
needle threader attached to one side

WILLIAM SHAKESPEAR



Charles Iles Birmingham
brass
size 2
lettered upside down
includes a bust portrayal of Shakespeare

WIR MÜSSEN SIEGEN



Settmacher Vienna Vienna
tombac
propaganda thimble: We must have victory

Y.W.C.A



Charles Iles Birmingham
silver-plated brass
for Young Women's Christian Association

Pictorial or cryptic messages on mid-18th to mid-19th century thimbles

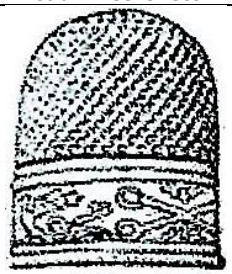
In 2022 I added this section: thimbles from18th century that have cryptic or secret coded messages punched or engraved around the band in the form pictures of everyday domestic objects
One day the meaning of these messages will become apparent: they are recorded here so that they aren't lost
I don't know a term for this group of thimbles; so, for now, they are known as Pictorial thimbles

These thimbles first came to our attention as thimble collectors. in Brian Read's book which has hundreds of drawings of thimbles found in archaeological digs
Two of these interesting thimbles are illustrated (drawings 289-290)
They are all made of base metals, including bronze or a copper-alloy – a few additional examples have emerged





trellis – scissors – thimble – key – bottle
Read #289 sketch





Read #290 sketches



bird - key - scissors - flower - trellis - cartouche - wishbone or stirrup





scissors - thimble – trellis - pincushion - woman - beaded cross
found buried in Staffordshire



initial ‘A’ – trellis - two cups - two rackets or clubs (may even be spoons) - jug-like ‘gin’ bottle





tho this thimble with an almost identical set of pictorials is very badly corroded, the message symbols aren’t damaged



two cups - two rackets or clubs (may even be spoons) - initial ‘A’ – jug-like ‘gin’ bottle -trellis – leaves – flowers - ASH



this thimble almost doesn’t fit as a pctorial – only the linking word ASH gives it a place



several linked elongated rondels – flower in eash – ASH



initial A - club - rose - cartouche - beehive - dog - fish

References

Christina Bertrand *Notions of war*. 1991
Jenny Scharff Bockel *Thimbles of Southern Africa*. 2004
Beryl Frank *Thimbles of France with waffled knurling.* 2003
Dorothy Friend *British commemorative and souvenir thimbles.* 1987
Franz Groiss *Thimble faktory in Vienna founded 1863.* 1990
Magdalena and William Isbister *Exposition thimbles*. 2010
Magdalena and William Isbister *The "merchant's warehouse" fable*. TCI Bulletin spring 2007
William Isbister *Late 19th and early 20th century French silver thimbles: a visual guide*
Brian Read *Metal sewing-thimbles found in Britain.* 2017
Molly Pearce *Queen Adelaide* At Your Fingertips spring 2018
Diane Pelham Burn *Identifying steel-cored thimbles.* 1993
Gay Ann Rogers *American silver thimbles.* 1989
Simons pewter thimbles. Thimble Guild spring 2003

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This listing of Interesting lettering on thimbles does not purport to be complete or accurate in all aspects. Rather it invites comments and contributions to add to our knowledge. My thanks to the contributors.

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