

# Iles' handpainted and decaled plastic thimbles

Charles Iles and later Iles and Gomms produced plastic thimbles. Early on, they were usually cream in colour. Their ivory thimbles were first produced in 1913. So some of the thimbles included in this topic are thus well over 100 years.

There are two types of Iles plastic thimbles that are decorated along the band of the thimble. Most of these were handpainted but a small proportion had decaled illustrations applied to the band – these are included after the handpainted thimbles.

It is so long after these plastic thimbles were made it is difficult to know whether these decorated thimbles were produced in the Iles' factory. Maybe they were sent out to piece workers in the area, to be handpainted? There are enough similarities in the thimbles that have survived to make it likely that they were produced before they left the Iles thimble factory.

The handpainted thimbles are usually painted all around the thimble or just around the band.  
It's interesting to see black monochrome scenes.

The decals would have been applied by the team in the Iles factory.

Decals are prone to rub off with use, tho there are a few examples that are in pristine condition, whereas the handpainted thimbles are still as clear as they were when they were completed.

The decaled thimbles seem to have far more detail than their handpainted counterparts.

In Edwin Holmes' book *The history of thimbles* (1986), he outlined how to tell whether a plastic thimble was made pre- or post-WWI. Thimble machines were converted for war work in 1939. After the war, new thimble machines had to be made. Plastic thimbles with elongated indentations were made after 1945.

The dot type indentations were made pre-1939.

I have included all thimble photos from my database – showing differently shaped Iles plastic thimbles – and we can see how the thimbles have fared over the decades.

for other Iles topics see:  
Charles Iles' 'The ... thimbles and boxes

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## HANDPAINTED THIMBLES



blue bird  
1945-



bunnies



flowers on black band



Christmas tree



Dutch scene in black monochrome  
includes figures, a windmill and tulip



flowers around rim  
1945-



flowers in pink and blue  
1945-



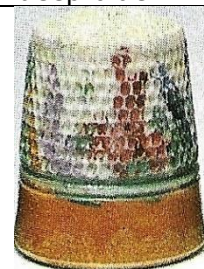
flowers in garden border  
deep blue rim



flowers in garden border  
blue rim with green bands



flowers in garden border  
brown rim with green bands



flowers in garden border  
wide gold rim





flowers in garden border  
reddish rim and bands



flowers  
pink and blue hyacinths  
painted in top half  
purple lines



flowers  
daisies  
gold rim and bands



flowers  
orange  
pale blue rim



flowers  
red and orange  
1945-



flowers  
red and orange



flowers  
roses  
1945-



flowers  
sprigs  
narrow pink rim



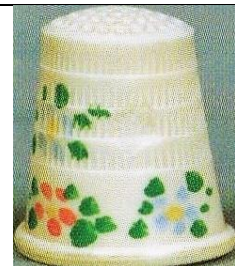
flowers



flowers  
wide mauve rim



flowers  
iris?  
1945-



flowers  
stylised  
1945-



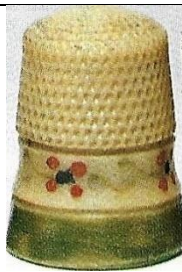
flowers  
stylised  
1945-



flowers  
stylised  
1945-



flowers  
stylised



flowers  
stylised



flowers  
stylised



flowers  
stylised



flowers  
stylised



flowers  
stylised



1910 1935  
commemorating King George V's reign



pyramid, deer and palm  
wide tan rim



pyramid, palms and figure with camel  
Beige, pink and blue rim



tree  
wide green rim and bands



woman with parasol



## DECALED THIMBLES



'Alice in Wonderland'

Alice with Cheshire Cat – Alice and the Dodo – Mad Hatter's tea party  
1945-



'Forget-me-not'  
'Made in England'  
with small blue birds  
L: very wide thimble



1945-



gardening scene – including a conservatory, a wheelbarrow, watering can and sunflower



'GE VI'

Coronation scene 1937



sedan chair scene – including figures in period costume and a woman playing with a dog



'The Cupid'  
'England'  
celluloid fingerguard  
cupids, roses, garlands and blue ribbons  
top R: pristine condition



1945-



## **Contributors**

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This listing of Iles' handpainted and decaled plastic 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.

EMAIL [thimbleselect@bigpond.com](mailto:thimbleselect@bigpond.com) TO SHARE YOUR KNOWLEDGE

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