

Girls' names on Victorian gold and sterling silver thimbles

What a delightful find this small thematic topic is!

At first glance they may seem to have been engraved by a Victorian jeweller - using the old-world girls' and women's names?

No, no - these are the way the thimbles were made by the Victorian silversmiths, with the names in high relief. Thanks to Norma Spicer and Di Pelham Burn's excellent reference book *Registered designs on thimbles*, we even know who made some of these thimbles.

All the names are in uppercase, but you may notice that there is more than one thimble maker involved, with the variety of lettering.

In 1887, **D & Lionel Spiers** (DLS) of Birmingham registered (RD 75400) their design of girls' names on plainly indented thimbles with large Old English Text lettering with a stylised leaf patterning around the rest of the band: all lettered over fine striations.

DLS names encountered to date are for Alice - Anne - Clara - Edith (i) - Jane - Maude.

Kate - Lucy - Sarah bear the marks of **Lionel Spiers** (LS) and these carry the same RD number.

The thimbles with the all-over daisy patterning are made by a different maker.

They contain the maker's marks for **Bent & Parker** (B&P) and they date from 1893, bearing the PP14988 numbering.

These names are for Edith (ii) - Maggie. They also made plain Polly thimbles in the same year.

Nellie with a similar daisy patterning, has a different maker's mark for **HP**, in 1899.

All these girls' names have slightly smaller lettering than the Spiers' thimbles but were still using Old English Text upper case.

James Fenton (JF) had Polly thimbles made from 1888 to 1905 with plain lettering.

There are even gold thimbles produced from the 1840s onwards with Beatrice - Elizabeth - Harriett - these were probably made in SMALL numbers?

For completeness I have now included a rare example with Elisabeth made by one of the German thimble silversmiths and French girls' name thimbles with Marie - Pauline by **Justin Levy Alekan**.

There is also an American thimble with Daisy from **Goldsmith-Stern**.



RD number 75400 registered by D & Lionel Spiers (DLS) in 1887
there is a leafy pattern on the verso of the band



PP number 14988 registered by Bent & Parker (B&P) on Birmingham 1893 thimbles



ALICE - (i)
D & Lionel Spiers



ALICE - (ii)
 in gilt uppercase cursive
 gilt raised leaves and flowers on verso
 no marks

no photo

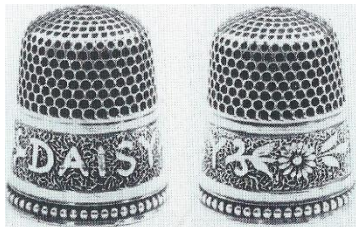
ANNE
D & Lionel Spiers



BEATRICE
 Old English Text lettering
 gold with a moonstone apex
 1840s



CLARA
D & Lionel Spiers
 Birmingham 1887



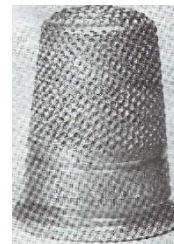
DAISY
Goldsmith Stern
 with a daisy on verso of band
 1890s



EDITH - (i)
D & L Spiers
 mirror image



EDITH - (ii)
Bent & Parker
 Birmingham 1893
 PP 14988



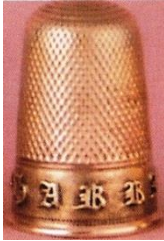
ELISABETH
 Germany
 1880 silver-plated brass



ELIZABETH
18ct gold
band of shamrocks/clover

no photo

EVA



HARRIETT
Old English Text lettering
gold



IDA
Lionel Spiers
Birmingham 1893
with feathery leaf band

no photo

JANE
D & Lionel Spiers



KATE
Lionel Spiers
Birmingham 1896
RD75400
lovely to see the complete band design
the girl's name seems to be within an ornate lozenge



LUCY
Lionel Spiers
Birmingham 1887
RD75400



MAGGIE
Bent & Parker
Birmingham 1893
PP 14988



MARIE

Justin Levy Alekan
Paris (1882-1893)
patterned rim



MAUDE
D & Lionel Spiers



NELLIE
HP
Birmingham 1899



PAULINE

Justin Levy Alekan
Paris (1882-1893)
red stone top
patterned rim
very large size



POLLY - (i)
James Fenton
Birmingham 1888



POLLY - (ii)
Bent & Parker
Birmingham 1893
PP 14988



POLLY - (iii)
James Fenton
Birmingham 1905



SARAH - (i)
Lionel Spiers
RD75400



SARAH – (ii)
ornate rim

References

Gay Ann Rogers *American silver thimbles*. 1989
Norma Spicer and Diane Pelham Burn *British registered design thimbles*. 2003

Contributors

Caroline Meacham-Elegant Arts | William Isbister | Ray Nimmo | Manfred Wolber

This listing of Girls' names on Victorian gold and sterling silver 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 TO SHARE YOUR KNOWLEDGE

© **Sue Gowan**
2011