Crummles enamelled thimbles and other needlework tools 1981-2001

Poole England

English enamelled thimbles - over copper or brass - seem to be the 20th century's antiques of the future. Crummles - who were based in Poole in Dorset - have been incorporated into Staffordshire Enamels, in Lye, tho they still bear the Crummles backstamp. They are known mostly for their enamelled boxes. They also produced needlecases, pincushions with the occasional tape measure - in matching designs.

The owner, John Aris, founded Crummles & Co in 1974 and he chose the name of Crummles, after Vincent Crummles, a character in Charles Dickens' novel *Nicholas Nickleby*.

Strangely, Crummles don't often mark their thimbles with a backstamp and one has to rely on the accompanying thimble box for identification. Once the thimble is separated from its box, the thimble becomes unidentifiable as a Crummles thimble.
From observation, all the thimbles by Crummles as featured below have one thing in common – their brass or copper apexes seem to sit over the apex, rather than being inset or having a tighter fit.
Examples of other enamelled thimbles have either a Staffordshire Enamels or a Halcyon Days maker's mark.



L: Staffordshire Enamels – C: Halcyon Days – R: Crummles

The Thimble Society of London and the Dorset Thimble Society commissioned enamelled thimbles from Crummles - the latter's do not have the regular brass apex and all of their examples contain the tiny Crummles backstamp.

I have encountered few Crummles thimbles - collectors, especially those who live in England, may be able to add to a more complete range of these little beauties?

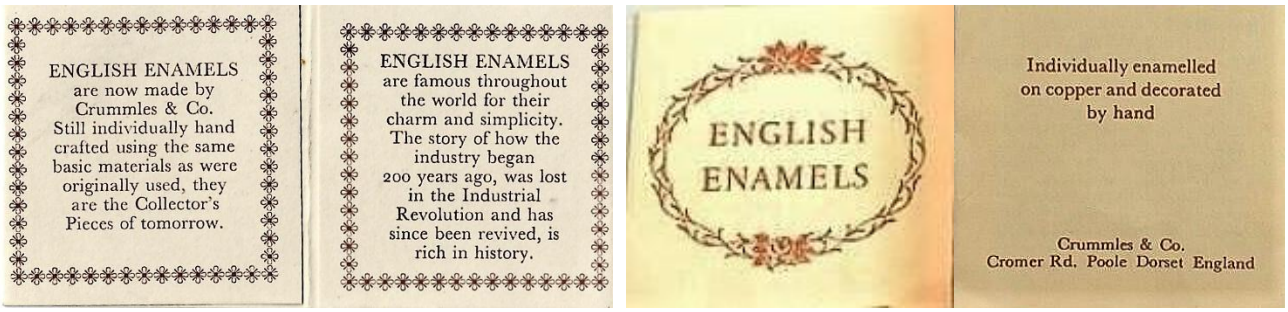
Some are handpainted, some will have a decal or transfer - this will be reflected in the backstamp, if one is present.

Some incomplete examples have recently come up for sale on ebay - they are missing their brass or copper rims and therefore are incomplete or seconds - can I presume that they have a Crummles backstamp to identify them as such? These could have come out of the workshop in Poole, in their incomplete state after Crummles closed.

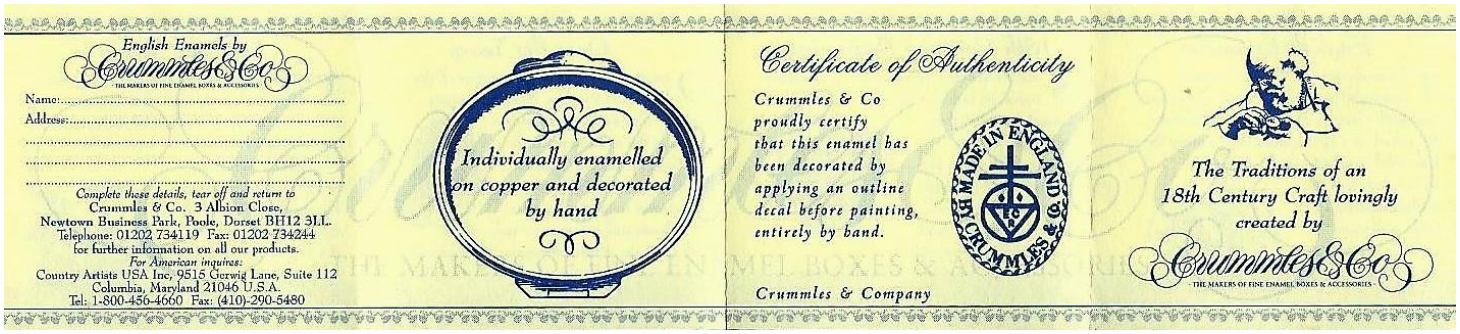
I have noticed that many of the later Crummles designs have no brass apex. This seems deliberate as there are so few. Not incomplete as those described above.
In 2022 black and white outlined designs - with no colour have appeared for sale of ebay



Crummles & Co backstamps
backstamp at left is the older of the two



accompanying leaflets

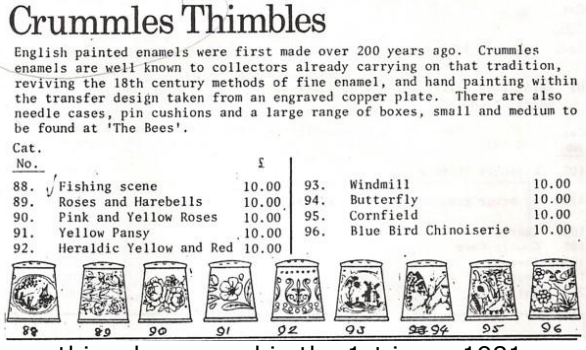




display of Crummles thimbles
from John Sinclair (shop) England 1980s

<u>for other enamelled thimble topics see:</u>

British modern enamelled thimbles
Cornish Enamels thimbles
Graham Payne handpainted thimbles
Peter Swingler handpainted thimbles



Crummles Thimbles

English painted enamels were first made over 200 years ago. Crummles enamels are well known to collectors already carrying on that tradition, reviving the 18th century methods of fine enamel, and hand painting within the transfer design taken from an engraved copper plate. There are also needle cases, pin cushions and a large range of boxes, small and medium to be found at 'The Bees'.

Cat. No.		£			
88.	Fishing scene	10.00	93.	Windmill	10.00
89.	Roses and Harebells	10.00	94.	Butterfly	10.00
90.	Pink and Yellow Roses	10.00	95.	Cornfield	10.00
91.	Yellow Pansy	10.00	96.	Blue Bird Chinoiserie	10.00
92.	Heraldic Yellow and Red	10.00			

this ad appeared in the 1st issue 1981
of The Thimble Society of London
the accompanying nine line-drawings has been useful
in finding and identifying Crummles thimbles
I have used the same terminology and numbering, until something else comes to light



fishing scene
corresponds to drawing #88
man on bridge – fisherfolk with yacht



roses and harebells
corresponds to drawing #89
C: incomplete version missing brass trims
R: no brass trims – inverted, with only first outlines in black and white



pink and yellow roses
corresponds to drawing #90
two C: colourways
R: incomplete from the workshop in Poole



pink flower - called yellow pansy?
corresponds to drawing #91
L: copper trims
C: incomplete version missing copper/brass trims
R: no brass trims – only first outlines in black and white



heraldic harp yellow and red
corresponds to drawing #92
R: incomplete version missing brass trims



Dutch windmill
corresponds to drawing #93
C: unbranded with copper trims showing red sails of yacht
R: incomplete version missing brass trims



butterfly
corresponds to drawing #94
R: incomplete version missing brass trims



cornfield
corresponds to drawing #95
R: incomplete version missing brass trims



cornfield set
with matching needlecase, pincushion and tape measure





blue bird Chinoiserie
corresponds to drawing #96

R: incomplete from the workshop in Poole
lower: thimble and matching pincushion
initials **PS**

Commemoratives



1981
Prince Charles & Diana
royal wedding
some examples have no Crummles backstamp
R: no brass trims – and only first outlines in black and white



1981
Prince Charles & Diana
royal wedding
some examples have no Crummles backstamp



1981
Prince Charles & Diana
royal wedding
some examples have no Crummles backstamp







1985
commissioned by
The Thimble Society of London
handpainted
there is an accompanying enamelled box



1986
Prince Andrew & Sarah
royal wedding
R: incomplete version missing brass trims



1997
The Dorset Thimble Society
no brass apex



1997
100,000 *8th April 1997 Shire Publications*
Eleanor Johnson's booklet *Thimbles and thimble cases* –sold more than 100,000 copies in its 1st edition – this thimble was commissioned by her publishers (Shire Publications) and appeared in her 2nd edition on page 3. The photo was also included in the last reprints of 1st edition 1997 on last page but only in black and white with no mention of the thimble maker
limited to 2
no brass apex



1999
Dorset Thimble Society
6th International Conference
no brass apex



2001
Dorset Thimble Society
7th International Conference
handpainted
no brass apex

Others



apple tree
on two sides





"The Beech brings Prosperity"
with a verse
R: incomplete from the workshop in Poole



blue birds
no brass apex
R: incomplete version missing its brass rim



blue floral band
incomplete version missing brass rim



blue flowers
no brass apex
unmarked



blue rose
with matching needlecase and pincushion
R: incomplete from the workshop in Poole



carnations



cherries



doves - yellow
in a tree
this decal also used by Halcyon Days



eagle and heart
this decal also used by Halcyon Days



embroidery stitches
in mauve



garlanded female figures or fairies
pale blue ground
no brass apex



"The honey suckle round the porch has wov'n it's wavy bowers"
Tennyson



iris
no brass apex



lilies & daffodils

no brass apex



The Mary Rose
R: unbranded with copper trims



Jemima Puddleduck and Mr Fox
© F.W & Co 1989 lettered inside
unbranded
Frederick Warne was the publisher of Beatrix Potter's children's books



Mr Jeremy Fisher
© F.W & Co 1989 lettered inside
unbranded
Frederick Warne was the publisher of Beatrix Potter's children's books



owls
no brass apex



primroses
no brass apex



robin



Royal School of Needlework
showing 'RSN' logo on side of needlecase
school is housed in Hampton Court Palace England
is there a matching thimble?





rural Dutch scenes
boxed needlecase - pincushion
is there a matching thimble?



squirrels



"Sweet daisy … sentiments"
with a verse



Sydney Opera House Australia







Tailor of Gloucester
© F.W & Co 1985 lettered inside
with matching needlecase and pincushion
unbranded
Frederick Warne was the publisher of Beatrix Potter's children's books



Three Bad Mice
© F.W & Co 1989 (Frederick Warne) lettered inside
unbranded
Warne was the publisher of Beatrix Potter's children's books





willow pattern
with matching pincushion

Crummles enamelled non-sewing tools

 **Statue of Liberty 1886-1996** commemorative pill box	 **Colchester Castle** pill box

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References

Denis Barber *Report on Janet Harper's talk 'History and manufacture of enamel thimbles* At Your Fingertips May 1997
Roz Belford *The Crummles & Co story* Collector Circle Gazette summer 1981

Contributors

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this listing of Crummles enamelled 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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