Ray Nimmo’s thimbles (RN) 2007-2020

My first email from Ray was in 2004 in which he signed off with “All the very best to you from upover” – which showed his wicked sense of humour – often portrayed in his thimbles. Examples of this is his use of rebus (where an image replaces a word) and playing with words (nobody’s prefect)

-

“I've never copied an existing thimble though admittedly I've made thimbles "in the style of". You will recognise some of Horner’s daisy, star, diamond, Louise, a la Nimmo style. He was fascinated by the tall Jacobean strapwork thimbles – you will find some of his examples here

Ray began creating his handmade thimbles in 2007 – working in his garage. He gradually added to the tools he used, experimenting with various patterns. Some of his thimbles became his stock thimbles, to which he could add embellishments - lettering or symbols to these plainer thimbles, and these are marked # below

Nimmo’s stock thimbles awaiting lettering or attachments

Up until 2013 his thimbles are not assayed. He had his mark registered with the Birmingham Assay Office on 11 June 2013. The earlier thimbles were marked STERLING with his maker’s mark. Some of Ray’s early thimbles have a small mark. It is a griffin mark
Most of the attributed names or descriptions were used by RN which I have marked *. The other names are my best guess

If you are interested in knowing how Ray went about his creating his thimbles, please just ask for a copy of Ray’s step-by-step instructions. He was self-taught and wasn’t afraid to experiment

Note the many different thimble shapes and sizes used and the many types of rims
Nimmo used various body finishes: satin finish – frosted – textured

satin finish – frosted – textured

With his brass thimbles, Nimmo sometimes used an antiqued finish

Nimmo bought different punches as his expertise grew and used them in different combinations

22 punches

Nimmo's domed apexes are fairly standard

some of Nimmo's apexes

-

various marks on Nimmo's thimbles
griffin mark (may also look like lion passant mark) – assayed mark 2013- - Nimmo mark + STERLING – range of marks used on his sterling thimbles

brass – nickel silver – sterling

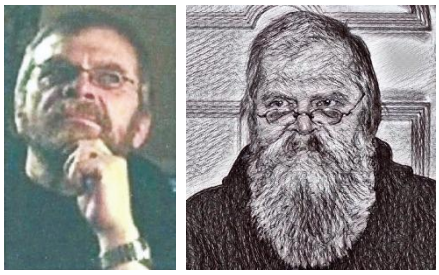
You may notice that a few of Ray's thimbles have a number (DORA, showing 8 and 9) – this is not a size mark as his thimbles were not sized. In this case it is the year that they were made

RN's distinctive style of displaying his thimbles for sale 2014

Birmingham Assay Office RN maker's mark stamp granted 11 June 2013

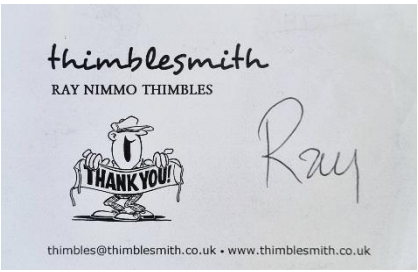
stamp mill used for making silver sheets thin enough for creating RN thimbles

range of Fish of the day designs – pincushion, thimble holder and various size or type of thimble

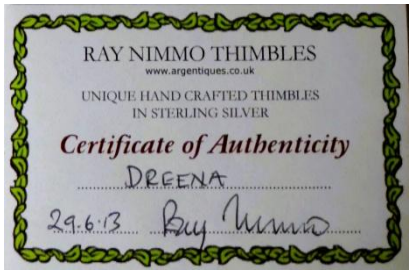

Ray Nimmo 2010 – sketch 2022

Thimbles are arranged with no regard for their date they were made. Most of Nimmo's thimbles have a distinctive front side – this is the only side I've shown - where the design wraps around, the full scene is shown

Nimmo uses Indian silver for a few of his thimbles. These reflect Raj designs. They are not marked in any way as he couldn't guarantee the silver as sterling



2007



example of Ray's certificate of authenticity 2013

Ray died 2026

Sterling silver thimbles – general

'2009'
snowflakes

'2012'

ai*
L: tapir – ai is the name for a sloth – neither seem to be an ai

(heart) ME
two L: post medieval style*

(bee) MINE (rebus)

alien road map*
2013

anchor

art nouveau fairy*

art nouveau flower* (2013)
different rims

art nouveau girl*
L: 2015

art nouveau moon girl*

atom flowers

atomic*
2013

bark* #

beach*

beaten surface #

BEE MINE

blackberries
2013

Blackpool Tower

BOLLOCKS!

Boots THE CHEMISTS
R: 2015

broken glass*

bubbles* #
R: post-medieval style

BUGGER BOGNER

bullseye*

butterfly
C: 2015

cabbage rose*
R: 2015

cat/cats

catch of the day* 2015
design copied from two brass bangles, flattened and then pressed onto a sterling sheet which had been pressed thru the rolling mill; giving a mirror image

2013 2020

ring

Celtic knot*	Charles loves Diana	cherub	Christmas holly* 2015

post medieval style*
close dimpling * #
C: cartouche
lower: post-medieval style*

cloth weave*

compass

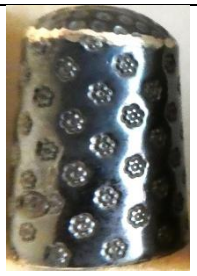
crazy paving

cross
L: in a heart

cross pattee*
2013

cupid

daffodils
bee on apex



daisies

daisies all over*

daisies in rows

daisies in vertical rows

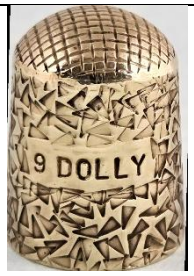
DAISY
nickel silver
2009

deco flower*

deco waves* #

deer
Indian silver

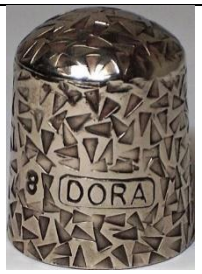
diagonals



DOLLY
nickel silver
2009

dolphin

donkey with saddle



DORA
R: nickel silver
2008 2009 2012

DORKUS
2009 2013

dormouse

dots with flower border

dove

DREENA
2013

Durer's Praying hands

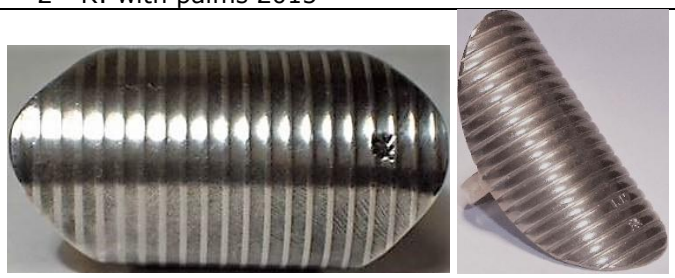
DUROID

eagle
(USA)

elephant R: made from Indian silver
2nd R: with palms 2015

eyes*
2013

farthing



fingerguard
griffin mark

fleur de lis

flower border

flowers* (large)
2014

flowers (stylised)

flowers*
L: 2013

flowers and leaves

flowers and leaves
Indian silver – showing insides similar to Raj thimbles

forget-me-nots
L: 2013

four leaf clover*
2015

frog/frogs

FROGET-ME-NOT

FU EU

galerie

geometric #

geometric pattern*
L: 2013

girl
brass on silver

GOOD LUCK HORSESHOE
R: 2013

grid diamonds

GRIPPA

heart/hearts

hedghog

Hermes*

HIC (drunk)

HOME SWEET HOME
2014

HOPE

horseshoe

I (heart) QUILTING

I (heart) TO QUILT

ICH DIEN
Prince of Wales feathers

ichtus*

Indian dieties
made from Indian silver

Irish claddagh ring
L: 2015

Jacobean style (strapwork)
top R: griffin mark

JOY

JUDY

kokopelli

KURIT

KWILTA

leaves* (2nd L 2013)
R: 300 mark

lighthouse

Lincoln imp*
2013

lion

LLAMEDOS
(sod em all - backwards)

LONDON 1960

Louise (asterisks)

Madonna* - Mary*
L: 2013

Madonna and child
2015

mayfly*
(dragonfly)
L: 2015

MCMX (1910)

medieval style*
griffin mark (not L)
2013

meese*

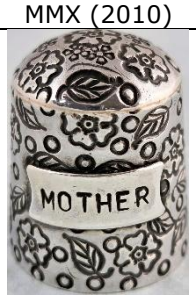
merde

MMX (2010)

MMXI (20I1)

MMXX (2020)

morning glory



MOTHER

mouse

MYRA
St Nicholas

Nepal (style)

NIPPA

NOBODY'S PREF3CT
two at R: kokopelli

open top*
L: Louise – R: daisy
2015

OUR FATHER …
lettered on thread thru a needle

owl and moon

pansy

peace

phoenix

pigs might fly

PRINZ-OBERON
(ferry)

random close punched*

Raphaël's Angel*
L: 2013

reclining nude*

relief stars*

rose

ring
two at L: additional cross mark

safari*
giraffe antelope buck elephant

safari*
lion porcupine zebras baboon giraffe

safari*
porcupine zebras giraffe
design copied from napkin ring, flattened and then pressed onto a sterling sheet having been pressed thru the rolling mill. Gives a mirror image
2020

scottie

Scottish thistle*
L: 2015 – C: 2013

sea waves*

Shakespeare

shamrock*

sheep

shell* (fan)
2014

SILVA
nickel silver
L: 2016

snake

snowflake

spread eagle*
2015

St Christopher

stars*
R: 2013

stercus accidit

studded cross*

sun

SWAN LAKE
with articulated swan opening to reveal ballerina

swastika

symbols

symphon (unfinished symphony)*

teddy

THE THIMBLE INN

thread winder

three lions*

tiny stars*

TITAN

TITANIC

tortoises with other animals

Trinity celtic knot*
2015

triskelion

TRY GOD

turtle/turtles

VICTORIA 1837-1901

Victorian design

VICTORY

waffle*
leaf border

waffle*
alternating diamond blocks

wanker
(play on words)

WAT

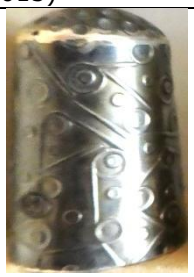
Westminster Abbey

WISH
(rebus) wish upon a star

yacht

Yorkshire rose*
(2nd R: 2015)

ZG HOLLAND
(beer)



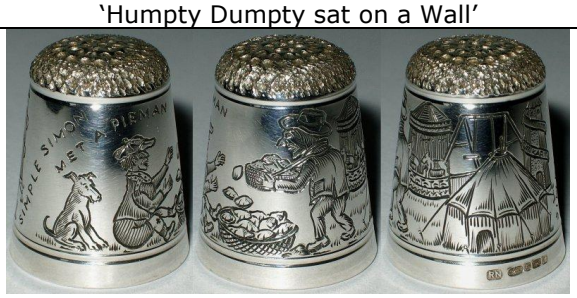
abstract, stylised or geometric designs, many used as base thimbles #

In 2020 Nimmo commissioned engravings by Master Engraver Keith A Raes (KAR) on RH blank thimbles

'Hey Diddle Diddle'

'Humpty Dumpty sat on a Wall'

'Little Miss Muffet'



'Simple Simon met a pieman'

'Three Blind Mice'

'The Royal Coat of Arms' 'Dieu et Mondroit'

Sterling silver thimble holders with matching thimbles

art nouveau flower

catch of the day
pin poppet – pincushion – thimble holder

cloth weave

DORA

forget-me-nots

Raphaël's Angel

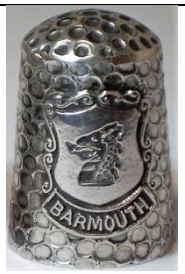
safari

shamrock
pin poppet

Sterling silver thimbles – placenames

Using his variously patterned thimbles as the base, Nimmo engraved placenames or applied city coat-of-arms

Quoting from Ray: "Across the world there are scores of places with naughty or risqué sounding names. Many are hilarious and worthy of a giggle; some are shockingly rude. Foreign place names are usually pretty innocuous in their native languages but can come as a surprise to English speakers. As place name thimbles are quite commonly collected here is my tribute to the more exotic places I've stumbled across. Made in sterling silver by **WTF** which stands for Willow Tree Forge...or maybe it's what you really think it is!"

AACHEN	ALBION	ALTENBURG	ANTWERPEN
ANUS (France) WTF mark	AUSTRALIA	AVIGNON	
B SCHANDAU	BAHAMAS 2013	BALLYMENA	 BARMOUTH
BASTOGNE	BATH 2013 2014 2020		

BOCHUM

BREMEN

BRUXELLES

BUCKINGHAM PALACE

BUDE
2020

BURY
2020

CAEN

CALAIS

CANADA
2013

CHARTES

CHESTER

CONDOM (UK)
WTF mark

COVENTRY

DEAL
2020

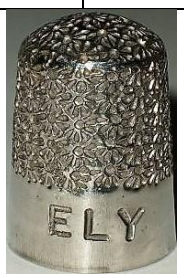
DOM-KÖLN
2013

DONCASTER

DOVER CASTLE

DUNKERQUE
brass applique

EIRE



ELY
2020

ENGLAND

ESSEN
L: 2013

FIRCOMBE HALL

Fucking o-Ö (Austria)
WTF mark

GELDERLAND

GERA

GREVENBROICH

GUERNSEY
R: 2104

HAHNENKLEE

HAMBURG

HANNOVER

HARZ-HEXE

HEIST

HESSE

HULL
2020

I.O.M

ISLE OF WIGHT
2015

JERSEY
R: 2013

KIEL
2014

KNARESBOROUGH

KÖLN

LLANFAIRPWLLGWYNT

LEIPZIG
2014

LIECHENSTEIN

LINCOLN

LONDON

LOOE
L: 2020

LÜBECK

LUXEMBOURG

LYON
2013

MALTA
2013

MALTA
MOSTA DOME

MANNHEIM

METZ

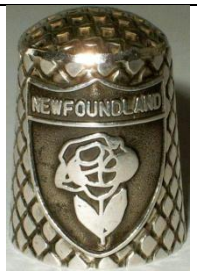
MIANUS CT (USA)
WTF mark

MONA
triskelion

MUFF (Ireland)
WTF mark

MÜNCHEN

MONTE-CARLO



NEWFOUNDLAND
2013

NEWQUAY
rebus
2013

NORGE
2014

OBERAMMERGAU

ONTARIO
2013

OVERIJSSEL

PARIS

QUEBEC
2015

RHYL

ROUEN

SCHWEIZ

THE SHAMBLES YORK

SHEFFIELD
2013

SPA

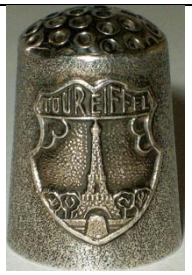
ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL
2013

SUISSE

SUMENGEN

SVERIGE
L: 2014

TIROL



TOUR EIFFEL
2014

TOWER BRIDGE

TOWER OF LONDON

TWATT (Shetlands)
WTF mark

UTRECHT

VERDUN

WALHALLA REGENSBURG

WARWICK
2013

Wetwang (UK)
WTF mark

WHITBY

WIEN

WUPPERTAL

WÜRZBURG

YORK
C: 2020 – R: 2013

YORK MINSTER
R: 2013

YORKSHIRE

ZEELAND
2014

In 2020 and 2023 Nimmo commissioned engravings by Master Engraver Keith A Raes (KAR) on RH blank thimbles limited to **1** of each

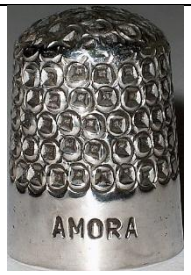
DOVER CASTLE 2023

LINCOLN CATHEDRAL - IMP RED - ARROWS

MODERN LOND0N SKYLINE

WINDSOR CASTLE

Sterling silver thimbles – slogans

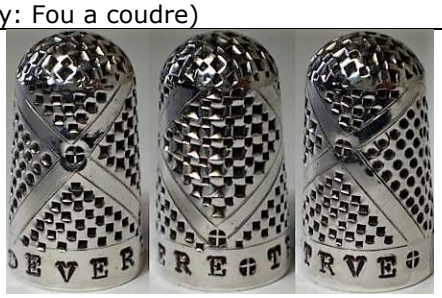


AMORA

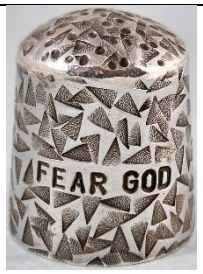
AMOU SANS FIN
(word play: Fou a coudre)

BE NOT IDELL

EVER TRUE



EVERE TRVE



FEAR GOD

FOREVER

GOD IS LOVE

GOTT MIT UNS

I LOVE YOU

MIZPAH

MY HARTE IS THINE

(STICK) TO ME
rebus

TE AMO
ring

Embellishing other maker's sterling silver thimbles

Using Simons of Philadelphia's thimbles, which were plain with a plain wide band, Nimmo added his own embellishments. Included here is a brass thimble

cherub

cupid

Federal Housing Administration

GOTTE …

heart

home

imp

lion

Raphaël's Angel brass thimble

swastika

Cast thimbles

Raj

Brass thimbles

Ray began working in brass 2007

Quoting from emails from 2012, Ray wrote "Many of those abandoned in the garage are incomplete and will remain so because of the solder crisis! Not sure if I'll ever make a brass thimble again".

griffin mark (looks like lion passant)

The brass section includes placenames and slogans

acanthus*

amor omnia vinci
example shows the trouble Nimmo was experiencing with the solder joins

arabesque*

BOLLOCKS

Boots THE CHEMISTS
R: die

bubbles
griffin mark

bubbles*
central band of daisies
antiqued finish

bugger bogner

catch of the day*
brass with nickel silver

Chinese rings
L to R: plain – *Boots* THE CHEMISTS – DOWN LONDON – Feng Shui – stylised flower – flower
L: antiqued finish

cloth weave*

crown over dragon
griffin mark at centre

crown over horse

crown over griffin mark

deco flower*

diamond grid

DICKENS
It was the best of times, it was the worst of times

ever true

EVER TRVE
L: antiqued finish

ewig dein
L: griffin mark - R: ring
L: antiqued finish

FEAR GOD
2020

fingerguards
griffin mark

fleur de lis with blocks of diamonds
R: griffin mark

forget-me-nots

Fukitol ™

geometric

GOT MITTENS
(word play)

GOTT MIT UNS
2016

hearts

HINTERTUPFINGEN

HOPE with an anchor

indentations
griffin mark

J. BURGESS PATENT
fingerguard

Louise

LOVE

medieval style*
griffin mark
two at L: antiqued finish
R: star border
lLower: flower border

paris

pebbles

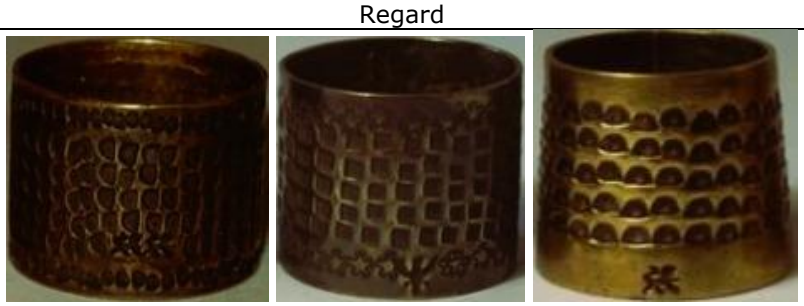
pense moi
ring
antiqued finish

pog mo thoin

Raphaël's Angel*

POOLE

Regard



ring
L: Feng Shui – C: eagle on rim – R: medieval style with griffin mark
antiqued finish

safari*

SHIT HAPPENS

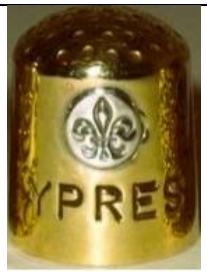
SO SURE
fingerguard

stars

turtles

V R
crown

waffle*
L: griffin mark

 WTF WTF mark		

Brass thimble holders with matching thimbles

 forget-me-nots R: with red lining
 deco flower*
 concentric rings holder with red lining, thimble and fingerguard
 catch of the day brass and copper

Copper thimbles

beaten #	Chinese ring	flowers*
Gemini applied in silver	SODA FIDE (word play) 2020	

References

Di Pelham Burn *Welcome to the newcomer* At your fingertips January 2009

Contributors

Wendi Aguiar | Joanna Blackie | Ray Nimmo | Wolf-Dieter Scholz | Jean Taylor

This listing of Ray Nimmo's 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.

EMAIL thimbleselect@bigpond.com TO SHARE YOUR KNOWLEDGE

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