

Thimbles with slogans

including thimbles with cryptic messages

I have always been fascinated with slogans, mementoes, inscriptions, mottoes, sentiment or keepsake messages on thimbles, with sayings using the language of love and chivalry or religious mottoes from the Middle Ages. (In a recent article in 2020 by Michel Painsonneau, he uses the term maxim for this type of thimble).

It was only when I acquired my first MIZPAH thimble, that I began to look at these thimbles where there is lettering around the rim. Mizpah is a Hebrew blessing 'May the Lord watch between me and thee whilst we are absent one from another' (Genesis 31.v49)

Go back in time, when women were closely chaperoned, to the Victorian era and picture a young man in love. How was he to plead his love? A gift of a thimble with a word or phrase was not too personal and if it was accepted, he knew he could then pay suit. We get a glimpse of this bygone era and its manners with these themed thimbles. Some of these tokens of love were given when parting and there may be several sad stories attached to some of these messages.

By sheer serendipity when paging thru von Hoelle, on p296 I noticed his list of these inscriptions. So that's where this listing began. I then added those from Holmes on p180 and Zalkin p83-5. Di Pelham Burn produced a list of brass messages in the May 1999 issue of *At Your Fingertips*. With your help, I have now tracked over **209** different slogans or mottoes on thimbles.

My perception of slogan thimbles was that they are Victorian and made of brass, with a few being made of silver. I now realise that they are made mainly of silver. The materials range from silver to tombac and brass - I have only seen two gold slogan thimbles. At the other end of the metal spectrum, I have come across a few of aluminium and one plastic slogan thimble; and most recently those of porcelain.

The earlier taller silver and brass or bronze thimbles from the era of James I (Jacobean) from the 1600s, bring messages from that time of chivalry and religious life – with obsolete spelling or lettering in Latin! They are distinctive for their strapwork designs, their messages on the 17th century thimbles have now passed into oblivion.

The slogan thimbles are mostly English and produced mainly in the Victorian era. French has always been associated with the language of love, so there is a small collection of French slogans, followed by those in German and Spanish, with one or two in Italian, Norwegian and Dutch. I have included slogans from all countries and all periods.

The only example I have not included is for 'Souvenir' which tho very prolific, doesn't have the romantic implications of this thematic topic.

The most popular slogan on thimbles is FORGET-ME-NOT: at February 2014 that numbers 55. Many of the brass thimbles were made in late 19th C and probably made by Birmingham's Charles Iles. As most of the silver thimbles were made pre-1884, it is nearly impossible to know precisely when these thimbles were made or by whom they were made.

I have ignored all capital letters for the slogan - they are filed alphabetically by the first word of the slogan - even when this is the French word 'Le ...', which is usually ignored in alphabetical listings.

The lettering is usually in upper case, plain letters, but Old English script was also quite popular.

I have also included the gold REGARD thimble - where six gemstones' first initial around the rim spells out the word REGARD. Recently another of this type emerged with DEAREST, created using seven stones. Neither type need words.

With this topic already being a large one, I have not included many slogan thimbles from the late 20th century (ie the Franklin Mint set) nor those made in reproduction. These replica thimbles of the 20th century are made mainly of pewter, tho there are a few in silver, like those made in 1986 by Charterhouse Mint. Political and advertising slogans are also out of the scope of this topic.

In 1999, in the Museum of Sydney, Bridge Street, Sydney, there was a display of base metal and brass thimbles excavated from The Rocks area. I have noted those found with slogans, below.

On some of the early silver thimbles, from 17th century, the slogan is lettered upside-down. Was this so that the sewer could read the message whilst she stitched?

Three facets of Victorian life were FAITH - HOPE - CHARITY. This little boxed brass set of thimbles by Charles Iles, has a set of these values or slogans. Traditionally these also had symbols: faith by a cross - hope by an anchor - and charity by a heart.



I have come across two examples of slogan thimbles where a rebus image is used: where a pictogram is used instead of words.

See 'Stick to me' and 'Tho absent I...'

I have now copied a new section from the Interesting lettering and symbols on thimbles topic about **pictorial** messages on 18th and 19th century thimbles. They will be found at the end of this topic.

a faithfull heart + constant mynde

Old English



SILVER

England

Jacobean - 1600s

with heart shapes

one has to be vigilant as there are reproductions of these early thimbles

a frende + to + the end

Old English

no photo

SILVER

England

Jacobean - 1600s

geometric strapwork

residue of niello

maker's mark inside **RL**

information: [Brian Read p.57](#)

a frende loveth at all tymes



SILVER
England
Jane Chantler

a frendes gift/a frends gift



SILVER
England
Jacobean - 1600s strapwork



SILVER
England
Jacobean - 1600s strapwork
apex patterning has worn away with use
mark on apex **IB**

a gift

no photo

BRASS
Pelham Burn

a gift of love



SILVER
England
1989
James Swann & Son/Thimble Collectors Guild

a keepsake/a keep sake



SILVER
England
1830s?
With large floral decoration
milled rim



SILVER
England
1840s
leaf border & ornate
rim



SILVER
England
1850s
'A Keep Sake'



SILVER
England
1860s



SILVER
England
1870s
faceted rim



SILVER
England
James Fenton
1895
faceted rim



SILVER
England
'A Keep Sake'
faceted rim



SILVER
England
faceted rim



SILVER
England



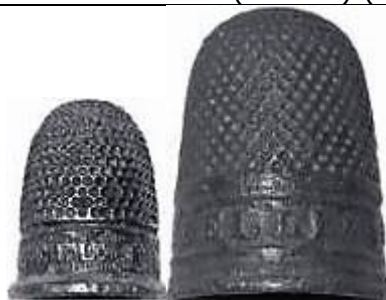
SILVER
England
with floral decorations
patterned rim

no photo

BRASS
Pelham Burn

a la plus belle

to the most beautiful (woman) (French)



BRONZE
France
19th century
L: child's

a moi (pensee)
think of me (French)



SILVER
France
purple stone apex
with a large pansy

a present



PORCELAIN
1860s

no photo

BRASS
Zalkin

a toi pour l'éternité
yours for eternity (French)

no photo

France

a token of friendship



SILVER
England
wriggle work band above slogan



BRASS

a toutes heures bonheur

continuous happiness (French)



HARD PASTE

France

absent not forgot



SILVER

England

faceted rim

accept



SILVER

England

1850s

scalloped patterned rim



SILVER

England

1870s

child's size
abstract flowers on milled
ground
faceted rim

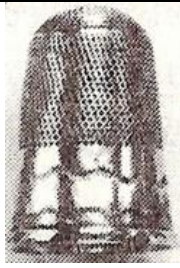


SILVER

England

child's size
faceted rim

accept a trifle



SILVER



SILVER

flowers and leaves on milled ground
faceted rim



SILVER

with swags above lettering
child's

acuerdate de mi

remember me (Spanish)

no photo

BRASS

Museum of Sydney

all for her



1820s
milled rim

always faithful



STERLING SILVER
England
with pictogram of a dog



STERLING SILVER
England
1989
Swann Thimbles

no photo

BRASS
von Hoelle/Zalkin

always friends



BRASS
England
Thos. Johnson
cursive lettering on green band by David Bates Woodsetton 1990
milled rim

amistad

friendship (Spanish)



14CT GOLD
Germany
Old English script
patterned rim

amitie
friendship (French)



SILVER
France
Lévy Alekan Justin
Paris 1882-1893

amizade
friendship (Portuguese)



SILVER
Portugal
Topazio
with dove symbols

amor
love



SILVER
Spain
1930s

amor eterno
eternal love (Spanish)



SILVER
Spain
20th century

amora



SILVER
England
Ray Nimmo

amore

love



COPPER/BRONZE
17th century

amou sans fino



SILVER
England
Ray Nimmo
2011

andenken

remembrance or souvenir (German)



SILVER
Germany
Old English script
enamelled band
amethyst apex



.800 SILVER
Germany
Gabler
patterned rim
gilt lettering

no photo

.800 SILVER
Germany
Lotthammer



SILVER
Germany
Gabler
Madonna
rope-like rim



SILVER METAL
Austria
Settmacher
gilt lettereing

are you to ...



BRASS
England
Thos. Johnson
gilt cursive lettering by David Bates Woodsetton 1990

as god has appointed



SILVER
England
Jacobean - 1600s

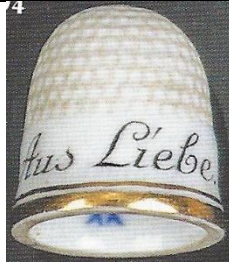
aus dankbar keit
out of gratitude (German)

no photo

PORCELAIN
Aldridge

aus liebe

out of love (German)



PORCELAIN

Germany

Meissen

lower case lettering

1900s

be happy

no photo

BRASS

Zalkin

be kind

no photo

BRASS

Pelham Burn

be merry & wise



BRASS

England

Charles Iles

patterned rim

be not idell/bee not idle



SILVER
England
Jacobean - 1600s
with strapwork



SILVER
England
Jacobean - 1600s
ring-type = tailor's shape
with strapwork
maker's mark **R**
information: Brian Read p.56
this example has had top inserted into the tailors
thimble
it doesn't belong there



be true mo hearte till death

Old English

no photo

SILVER
England
Jacobean - 1600s
with strapwork
maker's mark **I**
information: Brian Read p.57

be trve to god



SILVER
England
Jacobean - 1600s
with strapwork

be trw in love as tvrtl dove

Old English



SILVER
England

Jacobean - 1600s
with flowers

beautiful kindness



STEEL or IRON
France
c.1800
milled rim

benevolence

no photo

BRASS

Pelham Burn

beware of the thorn

part of a quotation from St Augustine 'Pluck the grapes, beware of the thorn' referring to Matthew 7:16

'Do people pick grapes from thornbushes'



BRASS
England?

unearthed in Loudoun Co, Virginia, US

blessings attend you/ blessing attend you



BRASS
England
Charles Iles

charity



BRASS
England
Charles Iles



BRASS
England
Charles Iles
tailor's

constancy



BRASS
England
Charles Iles

contentment

no photo

BRASS
Pelham Burn

dearest



SILVER
France
20th C

Diamond Emerald Amethyst Ruby Emerald Sapphire Turquoise
having the initials of the names of the gemstones as the message

deo duce

under the conduct of God



SILVER
England

Jacobean - 1600s
slogan repeated twice separated by initial **H**
flanked by crosses
strapwork design

dinna forget



SILVER
England
pre-1884
wriggle work completing design
child's size
faceted rim



SILVER
England
James Swann & Son
1989



SILVER
England
James Swann & Son
2002

no photo

BRASS
Pelham Burn

do not loose me



SILVER
England
1600s
lower case lettering

do unto others as you would have them do unto you



SILVER or 14CT GOLD
USA
1985
Simons of Philadelphia
Myrtle Lundquist lettered on apex
Dec. 26 1985

erindring

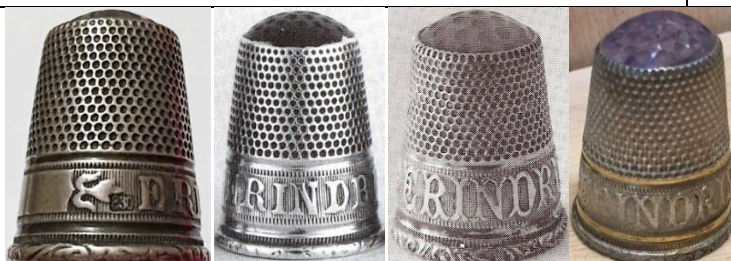
memory (German)



SILVER
Germany
carnelian stone apex



830 SILVER
Norway
H C Østrem oxo maker's mark
stone apex



830 SILVER
Germany
Old English script
C: carnelian stone apex
patterned rim



830 SILVER
Norway
H C Østrem oxo maker's mark
moonstone apex
leaf patterning

esteem



BRASS
England
Charles Iles
patterned rim



BRASS
England
Charles Iles
with floral pattering

ever dear



SILVER
England

no photo

BRASS
Pelham Burn

ever true



SILVER
England
Jacobean - 1600s
with strapwork



SILVER
England
Ray Nimmo
2016

ever true



SILVER
England
Ray Nimmo
2011

ewig dein
ever yours (German)



TOMBAC
Austria
Settmacher
1920s
milled rim



ALPACCA
Germany
Lotthammer
patterned rim



ALPACCA
Germany
Lotthammer
patterned rim

excelsior



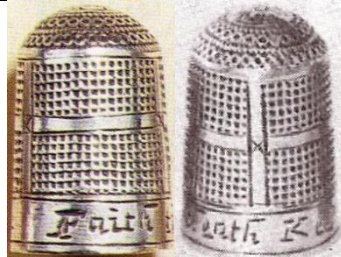
BRASS
England
Charles Iles
with sprigs before and after lettering

faith



BRASS
England
Charles Iles
1870s

faith till death keepe



SILVER
England
I D
Jacobean - 1600s
with strapwork in shape of a cross on one side
lower case lettering

fare well/farewell



SILVER
England
1840s
Old English script
with band of flowers
milled rim



SILVER
England
milled rim



BRASS
England
Charles Iles
with ivy leaves
rope-like rim



BRASS
England
Charles Iles
'farewell'
milled rim
with floral patterning

fare ye well

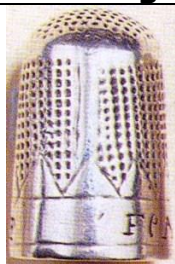


GOLD-PLATED BRASS
England
cursive lettering
1990s

fear god/feare god



SILVER
England
Jacobean - 1600s



SILVER
England
SR
Jacobean - 1600s



SILVER
England
Jacobean - 1650s
R in a square punched inside rim



BRASS
England
Charles Iles
patterned rim with acorns on band

feare god and honour the king



SILVER
England
Jacobean - 1600s
strapwork



SILVER
England
Charterhouse Mint
1987
reproduction from 17th century
Thimbles through the Ages - A Connoisseur's Collection
from a set of 12

feare god only



SILVER
England
Jacobean - 1600s
top missing

fidelity



GOLD
England
1850s
Old English script

for a friend



BRASS
England
1850s
Old English script
ornate rim



GOLD-PLATED
England
Old English script
patterned rim



COPPER GILT-PLATED
England
Old English script
slightly different
patterned rim

for auld lang syne



SILVER
England
with leafy band

for ou this giver is thine



SILVER
England

НА ПАМЯТ for memory (Russian)



SILVER
stone apex

forever



SILVER
England
Ray Nimmo
2011

forever yours



BRASS
England
Thos. Johnson

cursive lettering on turquoise band by David Bates Woodsetton 1990

forget me not/for get me not each thimble has a slightly different band



GOLD
England
Old English script
1840s



SILVER
England
Jacobean – 1600s
with strapwork



SILVER
England
1830s



SILVER
England
1830s
with dots



SILVER
England
1830s
with small bouquet



SILVER
England
1840s-1850s
gently scalloped rim



SILVER
England
1840s-1870s



SILVER
England
1850s



SILVER
England
1850s
with garlands above slogan
faceted rim



SILVER
England
1850s
with forget-me-nots around the
rim & on the band



SILVER
England
ornate wrigglework band above
slogan
patterned band



SILVER
England
with two rows of lacy wrigglework
faceted rim



SILVER
England
Ray Nimmo
2011



SILVER
England
1860s
wriggle work above
slogan
faceted rim



SILVER
England
patterned rim



SILVER
England
patterned rim



SILVER
England
patterned rim



SILVER
England



SILVER
England
faceted rim



SILVER
England
1870s



SILVER
England
feathery pattern



SILVER
England
with leaves
faceted rim



SILVER
England
heavily scalloped rim



SILVER
England
heavily striated
scalloped rim



SILVER
England
lettering within striated
lozenge
faceted rim



SILVER
England
maid's size
faceted rim



SILVER
England
with pretty scalloped
wrigglework



SILVER
England
utilitarian



SILVER
England
ornate rim



SILVER
England
wrigglework
faceted rim



SILVER
England
wrigglework
faceted rim



SILVER
England
utilitarian
child's
faceted rim



SILVER
England
James Swann & Son
1989
cursive lettering
available with various coloured bands



SILVER
England
Swann Thimbles/Thimble Collectors Guild
1991

milled rim with three blue painted bands



SILVER
England
1830s
Old English script



SILVER
England
1840s
Old English script



SILVER
England
1840s-1880s
Old English script



SILVER
England
1850s
Old English script
with richly patterned leaf band



SILVER
England
1860s
Old English script
patterned rim



SILVER
England
1870s
Old English script



SILVER
England
1870s
Old English script
scalloped galleried rim
with sprig of flowers



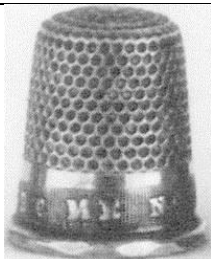
SILVER
England
1870s
Old English script
with leaf pattern



SILVER
England
1870s
Old English script
feathery pattern
patterned rim



SILVER
England
JWAC
1870s
Old English script
feathery pattern



SILVER



SILVER



SILVER (750/100)

<u>England</u> child's size faceted rim	<u>England</u> child's size with forget me nots around the rim & on band	<u>Germany</u> Gabler Old English script red stone apex patterned rim	
			
SILVER (750/100) <u>Germany</u> Gabler Old English script purple backed stone apex patterned rim			
			
SILVER with STEEL apex <u>England</u> Old English script patterned rim	SILVER and ENAMELLING <u>England</u> Constantine & Floyd 1880s	COPPER NICKEL <u>England</u> 1840s Old English script patterned rim	PINCHBECK <u>England</u> Old English script milled rim
			
BRASS <u>England</u> Charles Iles 1870s patterned rim	BRASS <u>England</u> Charles Iles 1880s beaded rim	BRASS <u>England</u> Charles Iles 1890s	
			
BRASS <u>England</u> 1890s patterned rim		BRASS <u>England</u> 1900s milled rim	BRASS (GOLD-PLATED?) <u>England</u> Old English script patterned rim



TOMBAC
Austria
Settmacher
1930s
with glass apex



GILT
England
1870s
Old English script
patterned rim



GILT
patterned rim



ALUMINIUM
England
milled rim



ALUMINIUM
England
milled rim



METAL
England



GILT METAL
with glass top



PORCELAIN
England
1870s
cursive lettering



PLASTIC (ivorine)
England
Charles Iles



this sewing compendium embodies all that is associated with keepsake gifts

fou de coudre



SILVER
England
Ray Nimmo
2011

friends

no photo

BRASS
Museum of Sydney

friendship



SILVER
England
faceted rim



SILVER
England
faceted rim



SILVER
England
leaf patterning
faceted rim



BRASS
England
Charles Iles



BRASS
England
Charles Iles
with floral patterning



BRASS
England
Charles Iles



BRASS
England
Charles Iles

from a friend



SILVER
England
1830s



SILVER
England
1840s



SILVER
England
1840s



SILVER
England



SILVER
England
faceted rim



SILVER
England
patterned rim



SILVER
England
child's size



SILVER
England
Old English script
with leaf patterning
patterned rim



GOLD-PLATED BRASS
England
cursive lettering
1990s



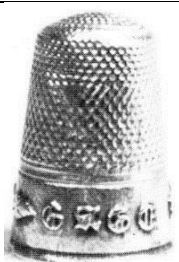
BRASS
England
with floral patterning
patterned rim



BRASS
England
Charles Iles
with floral patterning

gage d'amitie

bond or token of friendship (French)



GOLD
France
Old English script



20ct GOLD and ENAMELLING
France
blue band



SILVER
France
Old English script
patterned rim



SILVER
France
gold lettering

scalloped rim

gage de mon amitie
token of my friendship (French)



PORCELAIN
England
Chelsea Porcelain
1758-1770

gedenke mein
think of me or remember me (German)



ALPACCA
Germany
Soergel & Stollmeyer
1920s
patterned rim



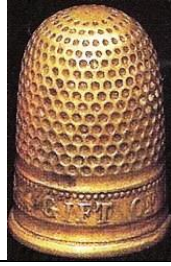
TOMBAC/NICKEL SILVER
Austria
Settmacher
1920s
forms a tiered thimble
gedenke mein / ich liebe dich
lower case lettering on green bands

generosity



BRASS
England
Charles Iles

gift of friendship



god be with you



GOLD-PLATED BRASS
England
cursive lettering
1990s

god guide me



SILVER
England
Jacobean - 1591 lettered
random Roman numerals on apex in clock shape
with geometric strapwork

god help us



BRASS
England
Charles Iles
patterned rim

god is love



SILVER
England
Jacobean - 1600s



BRASS
England
Charles Iles



BRASS
England
Thos. Johnson
cursive lettering on red band by
David Bates Woodsetton 1990
ornate rim

god will provie (provide)



SILVER
England
Jacobean - 1600s
clock of Roman numerals on apex
with geometric strapwork

good luck



SILVER
England
James Fenton
1892/1893/1894/1898/1910
with horseshoe
patterned rim



SILVER
USA
Stern Bros
1890s
with horseshoe on stippled ground



SILVER
England
Malcolm Knight
1989
with horseshoe



SILVER
USA
Jan Larson
21st century
cursive lettering



BRASS
England
Charles Iles
1920s
with horseshoes



SILVER-PLATED BRASS
England
Charles Iles
 cursive lettering



METAL
Germany?
 milled rim



GOLD-PLATED BRASS
England
 cursive lettering
 1990s

good regard

god be with you (Old English)



BRONZE
England
 Jacobean - 1600s
 with geometric strapwork
 lettering upside down - to face the sewer whilst stitching

goodwill

no photo

BRASS
Pelham Burn

gott mit dir

god be with you (German)



NICKEL SILVER
Austria
Settmacher
 1920s
 patterned rim

gott mit uns



BRASS
England
Ray Nimmo
2011

gott schütze dich

god protect you (German)



SILVER
deep red stone apex
patterned rim

happiness



BRASS
patterned rim

happiness & home

no photo

von Hoelle

health and happiness

no photo

BRASS

honour the brave

this slogan may fall out of this topic as it doesn't seem a personal message. Is he off to war?



BRASS
England
excavated
double rim – one patterned



BRASS
England
Charles Iles
patterned rim

hope



SILVER
USA
Stern Bros
1890s
with two anchors on stippled
ground

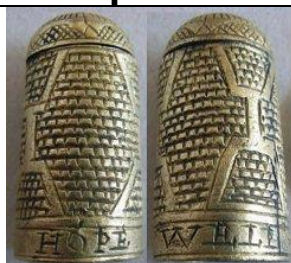


BRASS
England
Charles Iles
1870s



BRASS
England
Charles Iles
tailor's

hope well



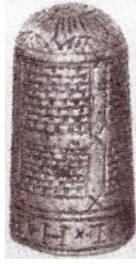
SILVER
England
Jacobean - 1600s
with geometric strapwork

humility



BRASS
England
Charles Iles
with a Greek Key patterned band

i hope well



SILVER
England
Jacobean - 1600s
with geometric strapwork

i ioy in thee



SILVER
England
Jacobean - 1600s

i live in hope



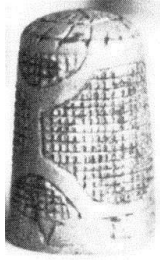
SILVER
England
Jacobean - 1600s
with geometric strapwork
with engraved acorn at apex

i live to die

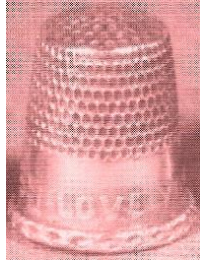


SILVER
England
Jacobean - 1600s
with geometric strapwork

i love you



SILVER
England
Jacobean - 1600s
with geometric strapwork



BRASS
England
Charles Iles
1870s



BRASS
England
Charles Iles
1890s
tailor's
with floral patterning



STERLING SILVER
England
Swann Thimbles
1992



SILVER
England
Ray Nimmo
2011



TOMBAC/SILVER-PLATED BRASS
Austria
Settmacher
1920s



TOMBAC/NICKEL SILVER
Austria
Settmacher
1920s
forget me not
forms a tiered thimble
Darling on upper thimble
in cursive lettering



TOMBAC
Austria
Settmacher
1920s
forget me not

i protect



BRASS
England
Charles Iles

i shall return

no photo

BRASS
Pelham Burn

i welcome thee

no photo

BRASS
Pelham Burn

i wis it better

Old English

no photo

von Hoelle

ich liebe dich/vergiss mein nicht

I love you/forget me not (German)



TOMBAC/NICKEL SILVER

Austria

Settmacher

1920s

forms a tiered thimble
lower case lettering on red band

i'll marry you



BRASS
England
Charles Iles
R: patterned rim
with floral patterning

i'll protect thee



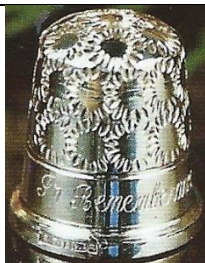
BRASS
England

in memory of



SILVER
England
1830s-1840s

in remembrance



SILVER
England
Swann Thimbles
1990s



GOLD-PLATED BRASS
England
cursive lettering
1990s

in te domine speravi
in you God I place my hope (Latin)



SILVER
England
Jacobean - 1600s
with hand punched dots

in trust be just



SILVER
England
Jacobean - 1660s
open top thimble
lower case lettering

industry



BRASS
England
Charles Iles
with leaf patterning



BRASS
England
Charles Iles
tailor's
with leaf patterning

je nen ai qu'une
you're the only one (French)



BRASS
France
19th century
with a coat-of-arms

je pense à vous
I think of you (French)

no photo

PORCELAIN
Aldridge

je y pense
I think about you (French)



PORCELAIN
Germany
Meissen
1740
with a sewing scene



LACQUERED BRASS
England
Woodsetton
1991
set of three
patterned rim
limited to 650 sets

keep me bright



BRASS
England
Charles Iles
mistletoe completes slogan

keep sake



BRASS
England
Thos. Johnson
lettering on blue band by David Bates Woodsetton 1990
ornate rim

keepe promise

no photo

SILVER
England
Jacobean - 1600s
with strapwork
owner's initials ET
information: Brian Read p.56

kur deu res pub trad for God and Commonwealth (Latin)



SILVER
England
Jacobean - 1600s
with strapwork
with crosses

la fidélité faithfulness (French)



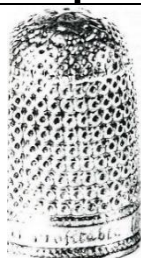
BRASS
France
19th century

la puissance d'amour/desire n'a mon repose the power of love/my desire has no rest (French)



SILVER
Netherlands
1600s
slogans are around the apex and then the band

labour is profitable



SILVER
England
Jacobean - 1600s

le temps passe souvenir

time passes memories remain (French)



18ct gold with white enamelling
France
approx. 1914

lebewohl

farewell (German)



SILVER
Germany
1900s
with leaf patterning
rope-like rim



BRASS
milled rim

lende me not if you love me



BRASS
England
Jacobean - 1600s
with geometric strapwork

let friendship indvre



SILVER
England
Jacobean - 1600s
A.N lettered on apex
with geometric strapwork

let love last



SILVER
England
Jacobean - 1600s

like mee



SILVER
England
G
Jacobean - 1600s
S F monogram

live and let live



BRASS
England
Charles Iles
with leaf patterning
patterned rim

live in love



SILVER
England
1650s

live to die



SILVER
England
Jacobean - 1600s
maker's mark on apex?

loose no tyme/time



SILVER
England
SB?
Jacobean - 1600s

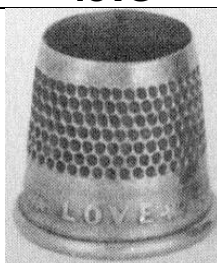


SILVER
England
with geometric strapwork
Jacobean - 1600s

love



BRASS
England
Charles Iles



BRASS
England
Charles Iles
tailor's



BRASS
England
20th century?

love and live pray and prosper



SILVER
England
Jacobean - 1600s
with geometric strapwork

love forever



STERLING SILVER
England
Swann Thimbles
1991

love god



BRASS
England
Charles Iles



BRASS
patterned rim

love is all

no photo

love one another



BRASS
England
Charles Iles
with ornately patterned rim

love the giver



BONE PINCUSHION
cursive lettering

love united us



BRASS
England
Charles Iles

love vertue



BRASS
England
Jacobean - 1600s
with geometric strapwork
lettering upside down - to face the sewer whilst
stitching

no photo

SILVER
England
Jacobean - 1600s
ring type = tailor's shape
engraved thistles
maker's mark **R**
information: [Brian Read p.57](#)

lyke stil and love ever



SILVER
England
Jacobean - 1600s

m'aimerez vous
will you love me (French)



BRONZE
France
1820s

marry me



BRASS
England
Charles Iles

may happiness attend you



BRASS
England
Charles Iles
with sprigs of leaves

may you be happy

no photo

me guide l'amitie

guide me to friendship (French)

no photo

PORCELAIN

Aldridge

mein gedanke

my thoughts (German)



ALUMINIUM

mi amor seguira hasta la tumba

my love will continue to the grave (Spanish)



GOLD

ornate rim

mizpah/mizpeh

this is Laban's prayer/blessing on parting 'May the Lord watch between me and thee whilst we are absent, one from the other'



15ct GOLD
Germany
stone top



SILVER
England
stone top



SILVER
England
James Fenton
1914
with two swans



SILVER
USA
Waite-Thresher



SILVER
USA
modern
lettered within heart shape



SILVER/GOLD BAND
USA
L.A.P & Co
'Mizpeh'



SILVER
England
Ray Nimmo
2012



BRASS
England
Charles Iles

photos R: – excavated at a private home in US – patterned rim

mon couer est à vous

my heart is yours (French)

no photo

PORCELAIN
Aldridge

mon feu durera toujours

my fire will last forever (French)

no photo

PORCELAIN

Aldridge

my hart is yours

no photo

SILVER

England

Jacobean - 1600s



PEWTER

England

lettering upside down- to face the sewer whilst stitching
replica/reproduction

my harte is thine



BRASS

England

Ray Nimmo

2011

на памьат (НА ПАМЯТЬ)

in memory of (Cyrillic)



SILVER (875/1000)

Russia

right facing woman's head mark = 1908-1926

ne m'oubliez pas

forget me not (French)



SILVER
Germany
beaded rim



BRASS
France

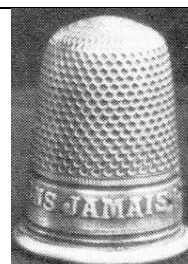
n'oublions jamais 1914

never let us forget (French)



.800 SILVER
France
1914

notice the rim - this is the original



.800 SILVER
France
Lenain
1970s (restrike)

ora et labore

pray and work (Latin)



SILVER
England
Jacobean - 1660s
geometric strapwork

pense a moi

think of me (French)



SILVER
England
cursive lettering
1840s



SILVER
France
Old English script
patterned rim



PORCELAIN
France
lower case lettering

pensez à moi/pensez a moy
think of me



SILVER
1800s
ornate floral border
stone apex



PORCELAIN
Germany
Meissen

perseverance



SILVER
England
CB



SILVER
England
Swann Thimbles/Thimble Collectors Guild
1991

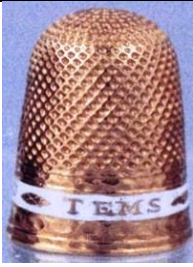
persevere

no photo

BRASS
Pelham Burn

profitez du tems/temps

make the most of time (French)



GOLD and ENAMELLING
France



GOLD and ENAMELLING
France
Pearls at rim



GOLD and ENAMELLING
France
early 20th C
red, white & blue
enamelled band



STERLING SILVER
France

prosperity

no photo

BRASS
Pelham Burn

protect



BRASS
England
Charles Iles
1880s
floral scroll

providence

no photo

BRASS
Zalkin

qui m'aime me suive

he who loves me let him follow me (French)



France

qui me néglige, me perd

whoever neglects me will lose me (French)



BRONZE

France

swallow in flight
1820s

recuerdo

memory (Spanish)



SILVER
patterned rim



SILVER
patterned rim



.900 SILVER
Argentina



SILVER
Germany

Gabler

lettering on stippled ground

regard



GOLD
England
1840s
Old English script in
black
belt and buckle design



GOLD
England
Ruby Emerald Garnet
Amethyst Ruby Diamond
spelling of the initials of
names of the gemstones



9ct GOLD
England
DHJ 1978
Ruby Emerald Garnet Amethyst Ruby
Diamond
spelling of the initials of
names of the
gemstones



SILVER
England
1850s
Old English script



SILVER
England
1860s
Old English script
band of flowers/leaves
patterned rim



SILVER
England
Old English script
patterned rim



SILVER
England
Old English script
patterned rim



SILVER
patterned rim



BRASS
England
Old English script
patterned rim



BRASS
England
Charles Iles
1870s



BRASS
England
Charles Iles



BRASS
England
Charles Iles



SILVER-PLATED BRASS
England
Charles Iles

regards

no photo

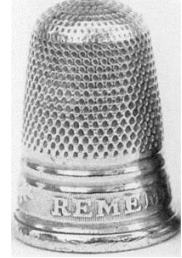
remember me/mee



SILVER GILT
England
1840s
patterned rim



SILVER
England
Jacobean - 1600s
geometric strapwork
... mee
see: Brian Read no 230



SILVER
England
1870s



SILVER
England
1870s



SILVER
England
1870s
patterned rim



SILVER
England
patterned rim



SILVER
England
1880s
patterned rim
child's



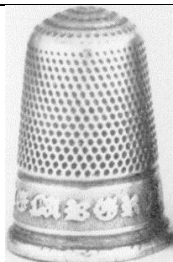
SILVER
lettering is dotted
patterned rim



SILVER
England
Old English script



SILVER
England
Old English script
patterned rim
no indentations



BRASS
England



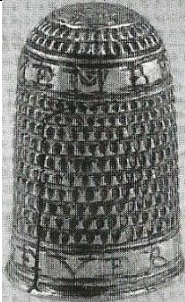
BRASS



BRASS
England

1860s Old English script	<u>England</u> Charles Iles lettering over striations	heavily scalloped rim
 BRASS <u>England</u> David Bates blue-purple band		
 ALUMINIUM <u>England</u> milled rim	 ALUMINIUM <u>England</u> Charles Iles lettering over vertical striations milled rim	

remember the gever

 SILVER <u>England</u> Elizabethan rose apex
--

remember who gives this trifle

 ENAMELLED <u>England</u> Bilston & Battersea tape measure

remembrance

no photo

BRASS
Zalkin

reward

no photo

BRASS
Pelham Burn

reward for merit



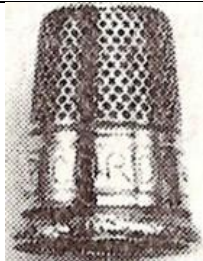
BRASS
England
Charles Iles
1880s
floral patterning



BRASS
England
Charles Iles
different floral band decoration

ricordo

memory (Italian)



SILVER
patterned rim

no photo

BRASS
Pelham Burn

sans vous je ne puis rien

without you I can do nothing (French)



BRASS
France
19th century

semper fideles

always faithful (Latin)



SILVER
gilt Old English script
1896

siempre lo mismo

always the same (Spanish)



SILVER

sincerity



BRASS
England
Charles Iles
1880s
floral patterning

soe not sleping

Old English



SILVER

England

Jacobean - 1600s

geometric strapwork

soi-moi fidèle

be faithful (true) to me (French)



BRASS

France

19th century

sola fide

faith alone



BRASS

England

Ray Nimmo (RN)

2020

sola fides

by faith alone



BRONZE

made in the lifetime of Martin Luther (1483-1546) and the Reformation, this was the great 'battle cry' of the Reformation

this is the earliest known thimble by about a century - with the slogan still in extant

soyez heureux

be happy (French)



GOLD

France

1860s

Old English script

soyons fidele a l'amour

let us be faithful to love (French)



STEEL

France

patterned rim

spo in dio

in trust in God



BRONZE

northern Spain/southern France

16th century

stich dich nicht

does not sting you (German)

no photo

PORCELAIN

Aldridge

stick to me



SILVER

England

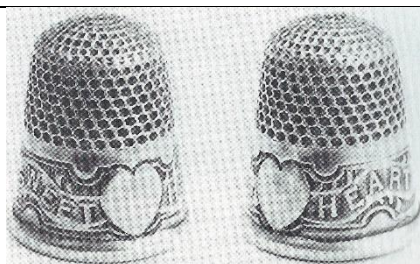
James Swann

R: 1886

R^D272815

pictogram of a walking stick (rebus)

sweet heart



SILVER

USA

Untermeyer Robbins

1900s

heart

te amo



SILVER

England

Ray Nimmo

2020

heart

tend yovr nedill



Solid brass thimble based
on an original dated
c1580-1650 found at
Acton Court,
Gloucestershire, UK



SILVER
England

The Tudor Needle

2024

available in either silver or brass

ter gedachtenis

in remembrance (Dutch)



SILVER
Netherlands
1840s
milled rim

thi + frinde + I'd + bee

Old English

no photo

SILVER
England
Jacobean - 1600s
strapwork

information: [Brian Read p.57](#)

the gift of a frend



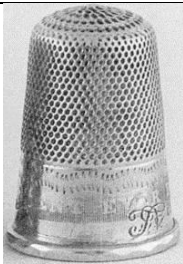
SILVER
England
Jacobean - 1600s

think of thee



BRASS
England
floral pattering
beaded rim

tho / tho' absent ever dear



SILVER
England
1870s



SILVER
England



SILVER
England



SILVER
England
patterned rim



SILVER
England
wide patterned band above lettering, blank
cartouche – small flowers after slogan
patterned rim



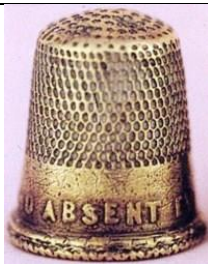
SILVER
England
patterned rim



GILT
England



BRASS
England
patterned rim

		1870s patterned rim			
					
BRASS <u>England</u> Charles Iles double rim		BRASS <u>England</u> Charles Iles		BRASS <u>England</u>	
					
BRASS <u>England</u> Charles Iles					

tho absent I forget thee not

 SILVER/GOLD <u>England</u> 1860s gold forget-me-not
--

tho gift bee small good will is all

 SILVER <u>England</u> Jacobean - 1600s

thoust my love in hert



SILVER
England
1600s
lower case lettering

to my love



GOLD-PLATED BRASS
England
cursive lettering
1990s

token of friendship



BRASS
floral patterning

toujours dévoué à vous

always devoted to you (French)

no photo

PORCELAIN
Aldridge

toujours fidel

(old French form)



D = 18mm / H = 24mm

IRON
France
1800s
running dog

toujours fideles/fidéle

ever faithful/always faithful (French)



STEEL
France
1800s



BRASS
France
1800s

no photo

PORCELAIN

traue nicht es schticht

just don't trust it (German)



ENAMELLING
Germany
handpainted 19th century
lower case lettering

trifles show respect



ENAMELLED TAPE MEASURE
Staffordshire

truth



BRASS
England
Charles Iles
floral patterning

unis pour toujours

united forever (French)



BRASS
France
1820s
two or three hearts & a shield cartouche at R

vaartwel vergeet mij niet

farewell forget me not (Dutch)



SILVER
Netherlands
19th C
bands of stars

vergeet mij/my niet
forget me not (Dutch)



SILVER
Germany
1920-1930
made for the Dutch market
patterned rim

vergiss mein nicht/vergissmeinnicht
forget me not (German)



TOMBAC
Austria
Settmacher
1920s
milled rim

no photo

Germany
Lotthammer

vinger in den hoed wie meedoet

put your finger in the hat (thimble) and play with us (Dutch)



SILVER
Germany
Gabler
1930s

vous en avez la clef

you have the key to it (French)



BRASS
France
19th century
padlock

wandelt op rozen

walk on roses (Dutch)



SILVER
Germany?
1920-1930
patterned rim

welcome



BRASS
England
Charles Iles
floral patterning

will you be mine

no photo

will you try me

no photo

BRASS
Museum of Sydney

with esteem



SILVER
England

Swann Thimbles/Thimble Collectors Guild

1991
three red bands
ornate rim

with love



SILVER
England

James Swann & Son

2000
enamelled band
lower case lettering



BRASS
England

Thos. Johnson

lettered red band by David Bates Woodsetton 1990
milled rim

with my love



SILVER-PLATED BRASS
England

Charles Iles

floral patterning

with regard



SILVER
plain band above slogan
raised abstract symbols on verso



BRASS
England
Charles Iles
patterned rim

with warm regards



BRASS
USA
John von Hoelle
1980s
made at the Iles & Gomms works in Birmingham
lower case lettering

worckes is profitable



SILVER
England
hearts
Jacobean - 1600s
ring type = tailor's shape
[see: Brian Read no 228](#)

worke a pase



BRASS (COPPER ALLOY)
England
Jacobean - 1600s
geometric strapwork
[see: Brian Read no 231](#)

yours truly

no photo

ALUMINIUM

zum geschenk

gift for you (German)



SILVER-PLATED
Germany
Soergel & Stollmeyer

zur erinnerung

for remembrance

no photo

Pictorial messages on 18th and 19th century thimbles

In 2022 I added this section: thimbles from 18th century that have pictorial messages punched or engraved around the band in the form of pictures of everyday domestic objects.

One day the meaning of these messages will become apparent: so 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: not cryptic the word I was first using

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



this thimble almost doesn't fit as a pictorial - 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

- Elizabeth Aldridge *Thoughts on thimbles. Part IV Gold and silver thimbles.* 1984
Christina Bertrand *Brass thimbles.* 1986
Frederique Crestin-Billet *La folie des Des a Coudre.* 2003
Cecile Dreesman *Een vingerhoedje...A thimble full.* 1983
Edwin Holmes *History of thimbles.* 1985
Magdalena and William Isbister, *The 'merchant's warehouse' fable* TCI Bulletin spring 2007
Michel Painsonneau *French thimbles with maxims and advertisements* TCI Bulletin fall 2020
Michel Painsonneau *Le dé à coudre en France (Tome II^e) XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles.* 2012
Michel Painsonneau *Le dé à coudre en France (Tome III^e) XIX^e siècle.* 2012
Molly Pearce *Queen Adelaide At Your Fingertips* spring 2018
Diane Pelham Burn *Brass message thimbles At Your Fingertips* 15/1, May 1999; 15/2, Sept 1999
Brian Read *Metal sewing-thimbles found in Britain.* 2018
Norma Spicer *Another rare and unusual thimble Stick to me* TCI Bulletin spring 2006
Thimble Society (of London) *catalogues*
John von Hoelle *Thimble collector's encyclopedia.* 3rd ed. 1986
R Warrington *Early English thimbles. Part 2. Thimble Society of London* autumn 2004
Estelle Zalkin *Zalkin's handbook of thimbles & sewing implements.* 1988

Contributors

Bernadine Biske | Joanna Blackie-Sew Many Bits | Carolyn | Sue Christensen | Steve Cocker | Sylvie Collett
Kit Froebel | Helga Hill | C Hunt | William Isbister | Friedy & Gerrit Kamp | Jan Larson
Caroline Meacham-Elegant Arts | Ray Nimmo | Ro Olbricht | Maurice O'Reilly | Di Pelham Burn | Molly Pearce
Brian Read | Linda Samaripa | Wolf-Dieter Scholz | Irene Schwall | Leonard Smith | Norma Spicer
Dan Walbrun | Mickey Walbrun | Sue Wilson

This listing of Thimbles with slogans 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
November 2005