# Interesting lettering and symbols on thimbles

## including thimbles with cryptic pictorial messages

Are you fascinated by various lettering – not the hallmarks nor the maker's marks – but something more specific - on your thimbles? Sometimes it is lettering of a commemorative or an historic event, others just inscribed with some unusual words or symbols. None of the following thimbles fall into any previous *Learn More About…Thimbles* topics: not advertisements, slogans, scenic, placenames, patents, brands etc. Some of the lettering is on an applied badge – probably done at the time of the commission?

It is as broad as thimble collecting but the occasion for the lettering or words or symbols is largely unknown: all eras (but largely ignoring contemporary thimbles), all countries and different materials are included, concentrating on the unusual. Who made some of the thimbles – for which occasion, tho some are self-explanatory – were they one-offs or made for commercial purposes? If they are of sterling, we usually know the maker.
I will remove the thimble if it becomes part of a new topic.

Quite a few have military connections, many from World War I. I have found a few examples of war propaganda thimbles, and I have included them here, having no other place for them.

I don't believe these are jeweller's inscriptions or monograms added after manufacture, in a cartouche.

I first encountered many of these thimbles in the *Thimble Society of London* catalogues. Most are rare and very few examples have been encountered: so well worth recording for posterity? I have combed Gay Ann Rogers, Edwin Holmes and John von Hoelle's thimble books for any clues. Those books date from the 1980s and our knowledge has moved on.

I would love for this topic to become a repository of oddities, mystery thimbles – the more cryptic the lettering, the better.

Some are included here just to record them as they are rare. They are made of sterling silver, gold, brass, steel, copper and aluminium, even a few china and plastic.

In 2022 I added a section at the end: thimbles from 18th and 19th century that have pictorial or 'cryptic' messages around the band in the form of everyday objects. One day the meaning of these messages may become apparent, so recorded here for that time.

see also: *Who made these named thimbles* topic

The listing is in alphabetical order of the lettering.

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## ЗТЪ ЕВРЕЙчЕТА СОфИЯ

brass
red rubbed off band
Bulgarian: Na Sofiiskite Evrei - English: To the Hebrews of Sofia
with Star of David
Germany
1890s-1910s

## 4 - H CLOTHING 1949 and "4 - H CLOTHING 1983" and "4 - H CLOTHING, 1984"

Simons Philadelphia
award winners' thimbles
top L: sterling silver with gilt band
bottom R: unknown year

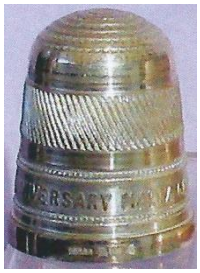
## 5 MEI 1945-1985

Pako Netherlands
applied symbol of dove of peace on flag colours of Netherlands

## 21

Simons Philadelphia
sterling silver
Seattle World Fair 1962

## 50th ANNIVERSARY MALTA GEORGE CROSS



James Swann & Son Birmingham

## 250 YEARS HANDEL'S MESSIAH 1743-1993

James Swann & Son Birmingham 1993
maker's marks are lettered in the apex so had been missed

## 1889 PARIS

Alfred Féau France
800 silver

## 1889 PARIS-EXPOSITION/1889 EXPOSITION

Alfred Féau France
800 silver

Roger Lenain France
800 silver
marked FRANCE with size #9 1970s reissue
Beryl Frank: In the 1970s Roz Belford, an astute retailer of thimbles … discovered that Lenain had stored the original dies for their thimbles … Some of these thimbles were reissued for export to the United States. … The size is marked on the thimble … If FRANCE is stamped on the thimble, it was made in the 1970s."

this reissue uses hyphens to separate the words – using the longer phrase

## 1900 PARIS

Alfred Féau France
800 silver

Roger Lenain France
800 silver
marked FRANCE with size #9 1970s reissue
Beryl Frank: In the 1970s Roz Belford, an astute retailer of thimbles … discovered that Lenain had stored the original dies for their thimbles … Some of these thimbles were reissued for export to the United States. … The size is marked on the thimble … If FRANCE is stamped on the thimble, it was made in the 1970s."

## 1900 PARIS EXPOSITION

Alfred Féau France
800 silver

## 1914

Charles Horner Chester 1913/1914
World War I thimble with a disc with an applied enamelled disc with a Red Cross symbol

## **1914** + Iron Cross

R: Gabler Germany
800 silver
World War I thimble with a 1914 Iron Cross on the wide band
crown and 'W' lettered above 1914
L: stone in apex – R: applied Iron Cross within indentations

## 1914 LYON EXPOSITION

Roger Lenain France
800 silver

Roger Lenain France
marked FRANCE with size #9 1970s reissue
Beryl Frank "In the 1970s Roz Belford, an astute retailer of thimbles … discovered that Lenain had carefully stored the original dies for their thimbles … Some of these thimbles were reissued for export to the United States. … The size is marked on the thimble … If FRANCE is stamped on the thimble, it was made in the 1970s." The original apex is flatter than the original 1914 issue.

## 1914-1915 ARANYAT VASÉRT

Settmacher Vienna Austria
aluminium
Hungarian lettering for 'Jewellery for iron'
which was the WW1 appeal for money for munitions from the populace
painted "stones" are original on blue band version –green one was made with no coloured stones
(see Groiss on Settmacher - p59)

## 1914 + 1915 + 1916

probably Gabler Germany
iron or steel
World War I thimble but what significance are the three dates
do the crosses have significance?

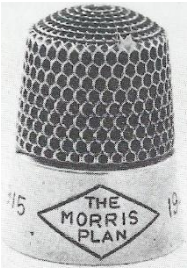
## 1914 16

Roger Lenain (?) France
gilt sterling silver
Isbister names this thimble as "Les filles filant" (Girls spinning)
unusual as there are two dates lettered within the pictorial

## 1914/16

Gabler Germany
800 enamelled silver
stone apex
includes Iron Cross

## 1915 THE MORRIS PLAN 1940




Simons Philadelphia
sterling silver
lettering within diamond-shape with dates alongside
1940s

## 1915 - 1919

tho I can't see the maker's marks this appears to be made by Henry Griffith & Sons
sterling silver
I feel these dates were placed at time of manufacture

## 1978

Monika Fald Germany
gilt sterling silver
replica of Kutch India Raj sterling silver thimble

## 1995 WIEDERAUFBAU FRAUENKIRCHE DRESDEN

Thorvald Greif Germany
925
commemorating the reconstruction of the Dresden Frauenkirche with applied rebuilt church, 1995
copper attachment on the side represents the ruins of the church 1945, which is placed next to images of bombed ruins – '13.-14.2.45' is lettered vertically on thimble along one side of copper

## 2000

Simons Philadelphia
sterling

## 2000 NEW YEAR NEUJAHR

Settmacher Austria
aluminium
Settmacher closed in Vienna in 2005

## 2000 YEAR

James Swann & Sons Birmingham
sterling silver
Space Hubble computer – International Space Station

## 2004-2014 Schiller's 200 Jahre Wilh.Tell

Julius Wengert Pzorzheim Germany
sterling silver
limited to **100**

## (A Gentleman in Khaki)

Henry Griffith & Sons Ltd Birmingham 1899
created during the Boer War being waged between Britain and South Africa

## A MEMORIAL OF QUEEN CAROLINE OB$^{T}$ AUG$^{T}$ 7 1821 AG$^{D}$ 53

sterling silver
wide band with royal symbols (thistle and clover) on the verso
it is interesting that this thimble mentions 'obituary' (OB$^{T}$)
she was Queen Caroline of Brunswick, wife of George IV

## A MERRY X-MAS

sterling silver with shadow gothic lettering on textured ground
unknown USA maker whose mark is a small crown
1900s
H Muhr's Sons produced a similar thimble

## A STITCH FOR THE RED WHITE & BLUE

G W Hatton & Co Chester 1914
enamelled bands in the order of the lettering - red at the top of the band
band lettering is not coloured

G W Hatton Chester 1914
also, with a Chester 1918 assay mark
blue lettering with an added full stop
enamelled bands

G W Hatton & Co Chester 1914
enamelled bands

sterling silver with enamelled bands
similar to above but lettering is not coloured
and not hallmarked

similar thimbles with no lettering were produced to commemorate coronation of Edward VIII, which never took place Chester 1936
L: the enamelling is worn
C: Charles Horner Chester 1936
b&w photo

order of the colour of the bands is reversed with the blue at the top of the band
R: Charles Horner Chester 1936

applied worn coat-of-arms

## A stitch in time

synthetic material
'A stitch in time'
TTG August 1987

James Swann & Sons Birmingham 1990

Halcyon Days England

commissioned by Thimble Society of London 1985

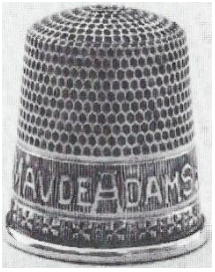
## A stitch in time saves nine

James (Hagop) Demirjian California
sterling silver

Simons Philadelphia
sterling silver
1900s

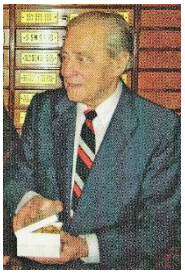
SJH
with stitches

## A THIMBLE FROM MAUDE ADAMS



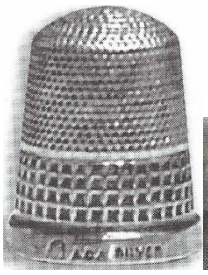
Simons Philadelphia
sterling silver
c.1906
commissioned by Adams (1872-1953) to commemorate her starring role in 'Peter Pan' in New York, where Wendy gives Peter Pan a thimble as a kiss

## A.C. ILLUM KYINDERNES BYGNING



Settmacher Vienna Austria
tombac
Illum (1863-1938) was a Danish businessman and store owner. His wife raised money for the Women's Society by selling thimbles thru the family business
shows Women's Building, Copenhagen
1930s

## A.O.A SILVER

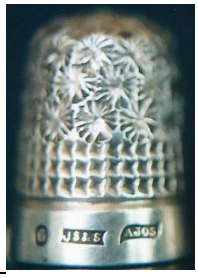


the extra mark seems to be a size mark

## ADAM RIESE 1x1 RECHNEN

Thorvald Greif Germany
925
commemorating the 450th anniversary of 1500 master calculator and accountant, 2000
blue glass apex and open work with Roman numerals of dates, as part of the design

## AJOS



James Swann Birmingham 1917 1918 1922
lettering is always contained in this scrolled lozenge
mark has appeared on several James Swann thimbles with different patterns

## AMERICAN RED CROSS HUMANITY NEUTRALITY

aluminium with a red-painted band – including the Red Cross symbol
I understand these thimbles were made during WWII
volunteers and members of the Red Cross prepared sewing kits, which were sent to the military in the USA and overseas
surplus supplies were used in one instance post-war by a schoolteacher to teach her first- grade students to add and subtract (eBay March 2019)

## AOPA

Ketcham & McDougall New York
sterling silver
enamelled badge has 'wings'
AOPA lettered across the centre – for Aircraft Owners & Pilots Association

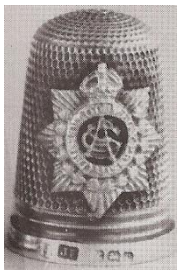
## ARB ... and others

monograms: AMY - CAF – DAS – DAW – EFG - JAW – JJB - JSH – KDK – LRL – MEK - MGG – MOM with hearts in centres of Ms

Leonore Doskow New York
sterling silver
chunky distinctive applied block lettering on the bands
marked 'Sterling Doskow Made in England' with a maker's mark on the verso
the mark is an L with a D superimposed on it, in a triangle
made in England by James Swann & Son, they bear the mark of Leonore Doskow
who worked out of Montrose NY USA - she designed and finished the thimbles

this Doskow creation with initials of **BCH**, lettered is cursive – is probably just a monogram
thimble forms part of sewing kit, and all have a smooth surface – tape measure, kit and thimble all bear the same monogram + .925

## *ASC*

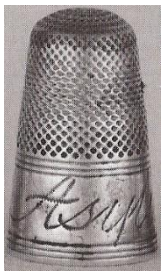


James Fenton Birmingham 1914
for Army Service Corp.
used for supplying the army with all supplies
applied badge has the *ASC* monogram in the centre

## Association of the Inner Wheel Club of Great Britain and Ireland

James Swann & Son Birmingham
for Rotary, with their logo – R applied logo
1983

## *Asylum 1808*



interesting, dated Georgian thimble has cursive lettering
steel-topped sterling silver

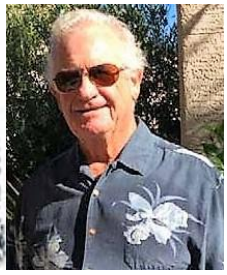
## ATLANTA '95

Simons Philadelphia
sterling silver

## BATTLE OF PLATTSBURGH SEPT 1814 LAKE CHAMPLAIN

Ketcham & McDougall New York
sterling silver
PAT'D
commemorating the centenary of the battle
ich then forms one thimble

## BETSY ROSS

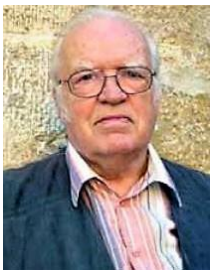


Joe Turner Jewelry Works Studio Coeur d'Alene
sterling silver

## BORN 1564 DIED 1616

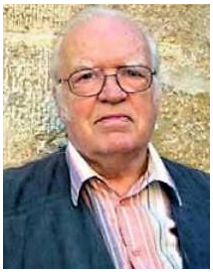
Shakespeare's bust in relief
steel-topped silver
c. 1776

## BENZ 1844-1929



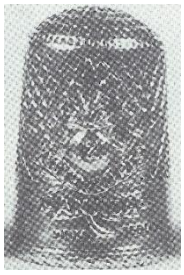
Thorvald Greif Germany
925
commemorating 80 years of Carl Benz 2009

## CC 1492-1992



Thorvald Greif Germany
925
commemorating 500 years of Christopher Columbus

## CANADA



Birks
sterling silver
applied unknown military insignia
for World War I

## CAROLINE QUEEN OF (rose thistle shamrock pictorials)

sterling silver
c.1820

## CENTURY OF PROGRESS CHICAGO 1934

brass
World's Fair commemorative

## (clasped hands)

sterling silver – pre 1880s
clasped hands – with pansy, carnation and oak leaves

## CLEAN HANDS FOR NEEDLEWORK

aluminium
so well used even the 'glass' top has popped out
neither a slogan nor an advertising thimble

## CLEVELAND 1940 K.I.O.

Simons Philadelphia
sterling silver
K.I.O stands for Kentucky Indiana Ohio
commemorating the annual bowling tournament for Union Printers
the tournament was held in Ohio in 1940
(my thanks to Thimblestuff for this research)

## CORKY 1-29-63

Leonore Doskow New York
sterling silver
made in England by James Swann & Son, they bear the mark of Leonore Doskow
enamel portrait in set-in circular disc of dog

## "CORONET"

brass
L: "Coronet" England
R: "Coronet" with 'Trade Mark' with a crown or coronet in between on verso

(crown)

Henry Williamson Ltd Birmingham 1900

(crown) **M. 1939**

Charles Iles Birmingham
tailor's brass-lined steel
marked for the Air Ministry as official property of the Royal Air Force,
commonly found in their Maintenance Units where they were used in the repair of parachutes, barrage balloons etc and also issued with airman's hussifs (Eileen Saunders 1991)
WD would be for the army ie War Department
RN would be for the Royal Navy

**KΔ** (Delta Kappa)

Simons Philadelphia
sterling silver
fraternity thimble
see also: ΠβΦ (Pi beta Phi)

**E.S.A - LONDON**

brass
Educational Supplies Association, London
probably made by Charles Iles of Birmingham
were they issued to schools?

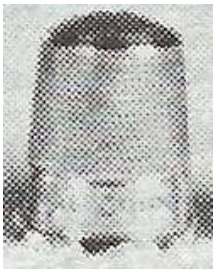
## ELECTION

Arthur Witting Birmingham 1927/1928/1929/1930/1931/1932
probably made by Henry Griffith & Sons as the sunburst patterning is peculiar to HG&S
Edwin Holmes in his *Thimble Notes and Queries* of winter 1989 … "In Britain the term is unthinkable (in the political sense). In the sense of 'choice' it is evidently a brand name …
the dates are not all for election years which at the time were in 1931."

## ELIXABETH HILSON HELP HOPEFUL SOROFUL HARTES

silver
16th century personalised thimble
apex missing
housed in the British Museum
unusual spelling of her first name

## ESSEX GIRL GUIDES



I am fascinated by the supposed hallmark for this thimble – 1949
was this produced as a fundraiser?

## EXCELSIOR

Iles & Gomms Birmingham
Brass
see also: Gregorita, Jesuesito, Josefina, Regina

## *'Exposition Paris 1937'*

Settmacher Vienna Austria
brass - silverplate
L: 'Austria' stamped in indentation
R: blue apex

## FECMU

sterling silver
applied badge is for the qualities of
**F**aith **E**ndurance **C**ourage **M**odesty **U**nselfishness
of the Royal Neighbors of America

## FEDERATION CENTENARY 1901 to 2001

Curtis Hine North Balwyn Melbourne
sterling silver
handmade
limited to **10**

## F-H-A

Simons Philadelphia
sterling silver
for Future Homemakers of America
L: 1940s
R: applied logo Ray Nimmo 21st C

## FIGHT FOR OLD GLORY

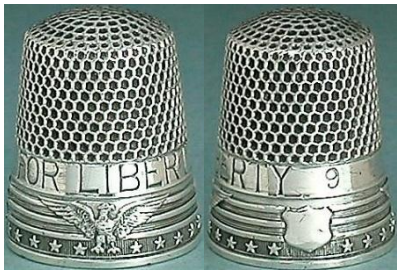
## (fleur de lis)

Lotthammer-Eber (six petalled mark) Pforzheim Germany
made for the Italian market
900 silver
R: Lotthammer-Eber mark has been over stamped with Florence's Piliti & Schreyer mark

## FLOOD

Goldsmith Stern & Co New York
sterling silver

## FOR LIBERTY




Ketcham & McDougall New York
sterling silver
1917

## FOR VALOUR

copper with applied Military Cross
1930s

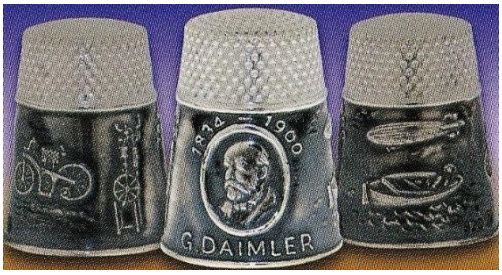
## FRIEDEN IN DEN NIEDERLANDE 50 JAHRE FREI!

Thorvald Greif Germany
925

## FRIENDS WAR RELIEF SERVICE

Ketcham & McDougall New York
also made by Simons Philadelphia
sterling silver
'Friends' would have applied to Quakers who were active in war zones as conscientious objectors
first set up at the start of Franco-Prussian war and revived at start of WW1
applied enamelled disc
1900s

## G. DAIMLER 1834-1900



Thorvald Greif Germany
925
175th anniversary of Gottlieb Daimler 2009

## *G. King* – G. K … – K …

sterling silver
Georgian trio
three similar thimbles with intriguing lettering
two of the thimbles have their lettering upside down to face the sewer when sewing

## GFS

Charles Horner Chester 1920
applied badge
Girls' Friendly Society

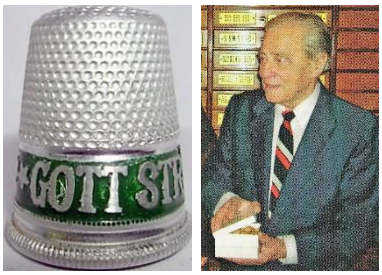
## GOLDSCHMIEDHAUS HANAU 1979

Monika Fald Germany

## GOTT MIT UNS 1914

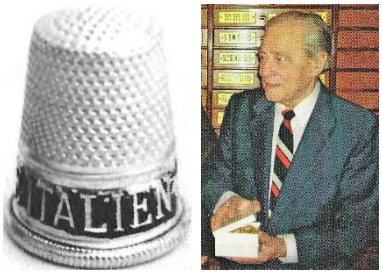
Germany
L: brass – C: silver with stone in place of damaged silver apex
propaganda thimble: God with us

## GOTT STRAFE ENGLAND



Settmacher Vienna Austria
aluminium
propaganda thimble: God punish England
green, red and black bands were available

## GOTT STRAFE ITALIEN



Settmacher Vienna Austria
aluminium
b&w photo

## GRAND NATIONAL JUBILEE

no photo

metal
for King George III
heads of the King and Queen

## GREAT BRITAIN 50 KM FRANCE MAI 1994 26000DM

Thorvald Greif Germany
enamelled 925
commemorating opening of the Chunnel

## GREENWICH 2000

James Swann & Sons Birmingham

## GREGORITA

Charles Iles Birmingham
brass tailor's - with sprigs before and after lettering
see also: Excelsior, Jesuesito, Josefina, Regina

## GS

Ketcham & McDougall New York
sterling silver
for Girl Scouts
applied green enamelled badge
1880s

## GUERNSEY

James Swann & Son Birmingham
Guernsey lettered diagonally on applied map of Guernsey

## HANS SACHS 5. NOV. 1494-1994 500

Thorvald Greif Germany
brass
commemorating 500-year anniversary of this German poet and playwright

## HAPPY CHILD UNHAPPY CHILD

pre-1884 sterling silver
lettering around rim with accompanying applied scenes around the band

## HEIL UND SIEG

Settmacher Vienna Austria
aluminium
propaganda thimble: Health and victory

## "HER MAJESTY" THIMBLE

Charles Iles Birmingham
This thimble had long been associated with Queen Victoria. This is not so
There were many commemorative thimbles made for the 1897 Jubilee
It may be an advertising thimble, but what is it advertising?
Additional lettering has "ENGLAND" below the larger lettering

## HERMÉS

France
sterling silver, with boar's head mark
is this (upside-down) lettering an advertising thimble – or the maker – or a prize for a designer working for the fashion label?

## HEROES OF THE CRIMEA

Charles Iles Birmingham
brass

## HIGHGROVE

James Swann & Son Birmingham
Highgrove House in Gloucestershire, home of King Charles III
presumably made as a souvenir for the when he was Prince of Wales
smooth apex

## HONOUR THE BRAVE

Charles Iles Birmingham
brass

## H.W.SILVO / SILVO

sterling silver
all over blackberry patterning
is this lettering an advertising thimble – or the maker's mark?
with appearance of the thimble at R, maybe H.W is the maker

## ICH KENNE KEINE PARTEIEN MEHR NUR DEUTSCHE 4-8-1914

Germany
brass
translated: I just don't know any parties any more
quote by Kaiser Bill an tne outbreak of World War I

## IHn

Ketcham & McDougall New York
aluminium
applied swastika symbols

## IHS

Swann Thimbles Birmingham 1992
made for The Thimble Guild
communion chalice with IHS in roundel above
IHS = first three letters in Greek for 'Jesus'
grapes to L represent wine – corn represents bread
limited to **250**

## ILES ALURINE

Charles Iles Birmingham

## ILES COMFORT THIMBLE

Charles Iles Birmingham
nickel silver

## ILES PATENT

Charles Iles Birmingham
brass
unusual, beaded rim – vitreous lining

## ILES TAILOR

silverplated
as this isn't open-ended like other tailor's thimbles, this name is a mystery

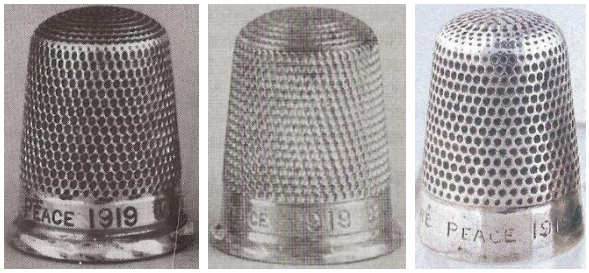
## *In stitches*

silver

## (Ionian Islands)

sterling silver
made for the British Exhibition 1851
with seven symbols around the band

## INFANT WELFARE PEACE 1919




James Fenton Birmingham 1918
lettering on raised narrow band
three slightly differently shaped thimbles

## JESUESITO

no photo

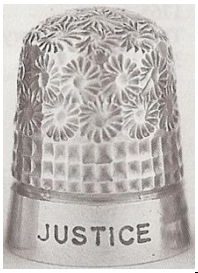
brass
double row of scrolls before and after lettering
see also: Excelsior, Gregorita, Josefina, Regina

## JOSEFINA

no photo

brass
double row of scrolls before and after lettering
see also: Excelsior, Gregorita, Jesuesito, Regina

## JUSTICE



James Swann & Son Birmingham 1948

## KING AND CONSTITUTION

no photo

metal
for King George III
royal cypher (GIIIR) with crown above
celebrating the King's 50th anniversary 1809

## KRUPP'S FLEISSIGE BERTA 42

nickname of German 42cm mortars used during WWI

## LEAVITT

Simons Philadelphia
sterling silver
band lettering of this name is vertical to the rim

## LEMBRANCA

brass
memento or souvenir - Portuguese

(Lincoln Imp) and **The Lincoln Imp**

sterling silver – unknown maker 1892
pewter
James Ward Usher, a Lincoln jeweller and silversmith, registered the Lincoln Imp, when he obtained the sole rights to use the Lincoln Imp in 1892
it was modelled on a stone imp high on the walls of Lincoln Cathedral
this is a RARE thimble
top R: Ray Nimmo Birmingham 2015
lower: pewter where the imp can be moved up and down, showing inner mechanism

**L.C.C.**

Charles Iles Birmingham
brass
for London County Council
and probably issued to schools?
interesting star mark on apex – blue vitreous lining

**LONG LIVE KING WM. IV**

L: brass – R: sterling Z
William IV reigned 1830-1837
Is this the earliest British royal commemorative?

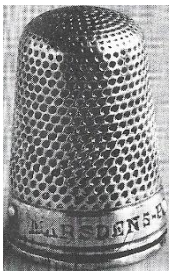
## LONG LIVE Q$^{N.}$ ADELAIDE

brass
Adelaide married William IV in 1818. They ascended to the throne in 1830

## LOT.No A

brass with Birmingham anchor mark
sturdy tailor's thimble with strong indentations

## MARSDENS PATENT

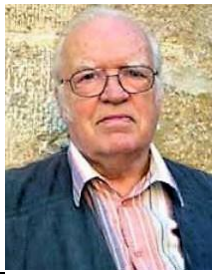


silver
first thimble patent granted on 12 May 1850 - to Charles Marsden (#13341)
ventilated thimble

## MARTIN & SON

Charles Iles Birmingham
brass-lined steel
is this an advertising thimble?
World War I

## MARTIN LUTHER 15.10.n.1487-15.2.1543



Thorvald Greif Germany
925
five dated panels, 1517 1521 1546 1555, commemorating life of Luther 1996
(see inner view)
first recorded by Di Pelham Burn (1993)

## Medical Corps for RAF Doctors

James Fenton Birmingham 1938
applied badge has medical symbol with a crown at the top as part of the design

## MOZART

Thorvald Greif Germany
925
commemorating 250th anniversary of his birth 2006

## NAFALAN

USA

## NATIONAL SILVEROID

Charles Iles Birmingham
made for Hitchinson & Co Ltd (Legge Lane, Birmingham)

## NDR

Simons Philadelphia
sterling silver
Nancy Reagan with White House in relief

## NEQG

Simons Philadelphia
sterling silver
National Quality Equity Fund

## NICKEL

Charles Iles Birmingham
W indicates it was made for Woolworths

## NICKEL SILVER

Charles Iles Birmingham

## NICKEL SILVER. STERLING SILVER PLATED

a bit of a mixed message?
Woolworths & Co

## N'OUBLIONS JAMAIS 1914

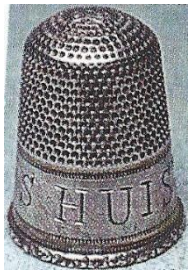
Lenain France
800 silver
some examples have an ornate rim

Lenain France
800 silver
marked FRANCE with size #9 1975 reissue
Beryl Frank "In the 1970s Roz Belford, an astute retailer of thimbles … discovered that Lenain had carefully stored the original dies for their thimbles … Some of these thimbles were reissued for export to the United States. … The size is marked on the thimble … If FRANCE is stamped on the thimble, it was made in the 1970s."
The reissue wording ends with an exclamation mark.

## NUR DEUTSCHE KEINE PARTEIEN 4.AUG.1914

Germany
brass
translated: I just don't know any parties any more
quote by Kaiser Bill an tne outbreak of World War I

## ONS HUIS



Gabler Germany
Dutch lettering meaning Our House
1900s

## PATENT

Charles Iles Birmingham
zinc lining with 'jewel' in apex
Patent no 22397 1895

## PATENT ENAMEL

Charles Iles Birmingham
brass-lined steel
is this an advertising thimble?
maybe any enamelling has worn off?
World War I
other examples exist in brass

(Peace)

Henry Griffith & Sons Birmingham 1919
gilt-lined
applied peace emblem with a crown
according to Dorothy Friend (*TCI Bulletin* January 1988) this is the brass insignia for the Royal Artillery

**PEPPER**

Horace Woodward & Co Birmingham 1888
made in the shape to use as a pepper shaker, with specific holes in apex
it has a diamond-shaped registration mark

**PETER PAN REG$^{D}$**

L: Henry Fidkin Birmingham 1918 – R: CU Birmingham 1918
Fidkin would have made the thimbles for the sponsor Charles Usher of Leicester
it is still a mystery what this lettering is for – it could be promotional, but it isn't advertising a specific product

**ΠβΦ** (Pi beta Phi)

Goldsmith-Stern & Co New York
panelled sterling silver
sorority thimble
see also: KΔ (Delta Kappa)

## PIONEER WOMAN

Ketcham & McDougall New York
sterling silver
applied memorial

## PRINCESS ROYAL

Charles Iles Birmingham
brass

## PRINS CLAUS 6.9.1926+6.10.2002

Thorvald Greif Germany
enamelled 925 in colours of Dutch and German flags

## PRINSES CATHARINA-AMALIA HK 017.12.2003

Thorvald Greif Germany
enamelled 925
scalloped rim

## P.S. BISHOP PAT.SEPT.20.1859

Peter S Bishop of Smithfield RI, an American inventor and manufacturer, patented his thimble #25482 for silver-clad thimbles

## RAF

Felix Morel Bath
blue enamelled brass with sterling silver RAF wings attached

## REAL GERMAN SILVER

Charles Iles Birmingham
none of Iles thimbles are made of silver – they are nickel silver

## (Red Cross)

Simons Philadelphia
sterling silver
applied enamelled cross

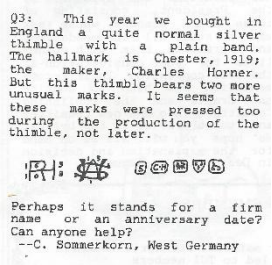
## REGINA

Charles Iles Birmingham
brass tailor's - with sprigs before and after lettering
see also: Excelsior, Gregorita, Jesuesito, Josefina, Regina

## RH

Charles Horner Chester 1919
what a puzzle this lettering is! RH with numerals –
(ignore the RH graphic above of 1919 – a typo – should read 1918)
lower: a date '1918' + '60' - on a wider band
there is then the intertwined WS or SW capped by more numerals on the verso
that isn't meant as a monogram?
I recently encountered a query from a German member in a 1986 *TCI Bulletin*, asking about this thimble - "It seems that these marks were pressed during the production of the thimble, not later … Perhaps it is for a firm's name or an anniversary date?"
no-one ever attempted an answer
and now - late in 2020 – a thimble discovery with almost identical markings -
by James Fenton
there has been a suggestion that this is an anniversary date
the date could be 19 January (numerals from the monogram) and the date is 60 years in 1918 (so 1858)
they could have been privately engraved using plain thimbles …

James Fenton Birmingham 1918



Q3: This year we bought in England a quite normal silver thimble with a plain band. The hallmark is Chester, 1919; the maker, Charles Horner. But this thimble bears two more unusual marks. It seems that these marks were pressed too during the production of the thimble, not later.

Perhaps it stands for a firm name or an anniversary date? Can anyone help?
--C. Sommerkorn, West Germany

## ROBERT F KENNEDY WE MOURN OUR LOSS 1925-1968

USA
plastic

## ROYAL ENGINEERS

James Fenton Birmingham 1939
George V cypher (the monarch is their Commander-in-Chief)
RE's motto: Honi soit qui mal y pense

## SCHMUCKMUSEUM PFORZHEIM 1978

Monika Fald Germany
museum dedicated to history of jewellery

## SCHWARZ-GELBES KREUZ 1914

aluminium
promoting an Austrian aid organisation for war invalids and their families, which started on 31 August 1914
notice the depiction of the medal pressed into the thimble
available with black or yellow band

## SIEG HEIL 1914

900 silver
stamped D.R.G.M.

## SILVER. STERLING

Charles Iles Birmingham

## SOUVENIR

Charles Iles Birmingham
brass
with sprigs before and after lettering

## SOUVENIR ST LOUIS EXPOSITION 1904

Iles & Gomms Birmingham
nickel silver

## SOUVENIR ST. LOUIS EXPOSITION 1904

metal

## (St Hubert)

French sterling silver
stag with three shamrocks affixed on band

## St Peter's Band of Hope. July 1918

MAA Birmingham 1917

## STÄDTISCHES MUSEUM SCHWÄBISCH GMÜND 1979

Monika Falk Germany

## STER$^{G}$ SILVER

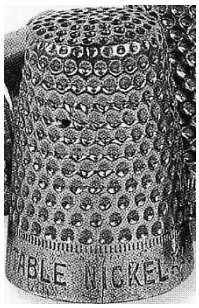
## STIRLING SILVER

mid-Victorian sterling silver with steel apex
interesting spelling

## (swastika)

Waite Thresher USA
sterling silver with applied swastika L: child's size
1890s

## TABLE NICKEL



## TAYLOR'S NEW YORK 1939 WORLD'S FAIR

Taylor's Pork Roll was first available at the 1939 World's Fair
aluminium advertising with blue band

## TAYLOR'S NON-SLIP PATENT

Charles Iles Birmingham
brass

## "THE GIRLS' CLUB"

Webster USA
sterling silver
lettering includes a swastika
thimble would have been made before World War II
two different forms of lettering

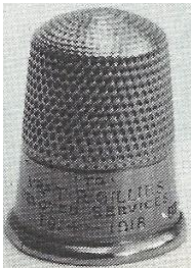
## THE INNER WHEEL

James Swann & Son Birmingham
enamelled sterling silver
The Inner Wheel is for women in Rotary Services Clubs

## TO JEAN FROM THE LANTERN THEATRE

James Swann & Son Birmingham 1983
who is Jean?
Lantern Theatre is in Sheffield in England

## TO MRS T.R.GILLIES DEVOTED SERVICES 1914-1918

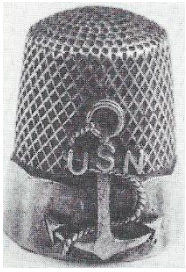


9ct gold
Gordon Highlanders emblem on the verso
b&w photo

## U· S ·1

Simons Philadelphia
14ct gold
doesn't look like a cartouche

## U S N




Simons Philadelphia
10-panelled sterling silver
applied anchor with USN
1940s

## VICTORIA G.G, 1230

Gabler Germany
aluminium
reeded rim
what intriguing wording
lettering almost looks like a London phone number from 1920s

## VOTE IN 1989

lacquered brass
Settmacher Vienna Austria
decorated in USA

## VROUWENKIESRECHT

brass
reeded rim
Dutch: Women's suffrage

## WAR CHEST FUND

Charles Iles Birmingham
ivorine
During the 1914-1918 war 13,000 white ivorine thimbles were donated by Mrs Ninian Thomson to the War Chest Thimble Fund in New South Wales to raise funds for comforts for the Australian men fighting in Europe during World War I

## WEMBLEY 1924 (1925)

Henry Griffith & Sons Birmingham 1924
the lion was the symbol of the 1924 British Empire Exhibition
as shown on the commemorative postage stamps
thimble box lettered 'Present from Wembley' with identical lion as on thimble

different thimbles from Charles Iles
nickel-plated and brass versions lettered BRITISH EMPIRE EXHIBITION

Arcadian China
British Empire Exhibition Wembley 1925
RED$^{G}$ Nº712455

## *Where did I get this ?*

base metal with brass band
needle threader attached to one side

## WILLIAM SHAKESPEAR

Charles Iles Birmingham
brass
size 2
lettered upside down
includes a bust portrayal of Shakespeare

## WIR MÜSSEN SIEGEN

Settmacher Vienna Vienna
tombac
propaganda thimble: We must have victory

## Y.W.C.A

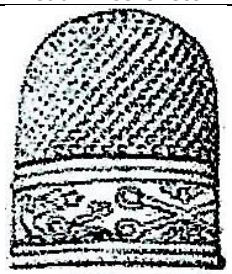
Charles Iles Birmingham
silver-plated brass
for Young Women's Christian Association

## Pictorial or cryptic messages on mid-18th to mid-19th century thimbles

In 2022 I added this section: thimbles from18th century that have cryptic or secret coded messages punched or engraved around the band in the form pictures of everyday domestic objects
One day the meaning of these messages will become apparent: 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

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

tho this thimble with an almost identical set of pictorials is very badly corroded, the message symbols aren't damaged

two cups - two rackets or clubs (may even be spoons) - initial 'A' – jug-like 'gin' bottle -trellis – leaves – flowers - ASH

this thimble almost doesn't fit as a pctorial – 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

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## References


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*Simons pewter thimbles.* Thimble Guild spring 2003


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This listing of Interesting lettering on 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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**April 2015**