

Cornish Enamels thimbles 1995-1997

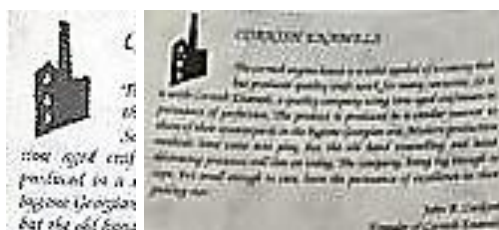
Regular visitors to this site, know of my penchant for all things enamelled in the small world of thimbles. My first enamelled thimble was a Halcyon Days thimble purchased from Susan Benjamin's small shop tucked away in the heart of Mayfair London, 1984. No visit to London was complete after that without a visit to this long-vanished store.

Now it is the turn of this recent (well, nearly 20 years ago) group of enamellers, Cornish Enamels and their thimbles. Based in Helston in Cornwall, they produced thimbles, beautifully handcrafted and packaged for the limited period of 1995 to 1997.

The skill of hand enamelling and then hand decorating the thimbles is from Georgian times. Combining these age old techniques with modern production methods, "the company is big enough to cope, yet small enough to care and guarantee excellence."

I first came across these different thimbles thru the second-hand market. It came thus as a lovely surprise to find that they were first advertised for sale thru The Thimble Guild (TTG) in their catalogue of July 1995.

Almost monthly after that, one of their commissioned thimbles was offered for sale – with lots of colourful descriptions including their makers' name. I found the last one was advertised for sale in November 1997. If they were being marketed elsewhere, I have still to establish where or by whom.



Cornish Enamels' Cornish engine house mark – can be found on some of sets with thimble holder egg

Their other merchandise, being larger, have a cursive E as the maker's mark. In some of their thimbles this cursive E is lettered up in the apex. Its significance escapes me.



I have found over the years that the various thimble catalogues didn't always mention their thimble suppliers in any detail.

So, it was with delight that I found, in the April 1996 issue of TTG, a full page spread detailing three of the Cornish Enamels artists by name. The thimbles bear these initials. It's worth quoting from the TTG issue to give you an idea of each painter.

TW (Tristin Way) "... a former combat artist and portrait painter for the armed forces and the official artist for the British Olympic team in 1992. His childhood in Africa has left him with an abiding love of wildlife which inspires his work."

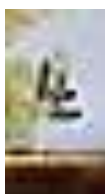


GF (Glen Freestone) "... trained as a ceramic artist, specialising in hand built porcelain pieces and has exhibited in London and the S.W. of England. He has always maintained an interest in minerals and glazes trying to incorporate this knowledge into his work." His work is inspired by the semi-precious stones, gems and minerals found in and around Cornwall.



2020 Falmouth Art Gallery

LL (Louise Lazarowicz) "... produces some of the finest miniature painting seen on enamelware today."



"All the artists at Cornish Enamels take an immense pride in their work. For them it is not just a job but a way of life."

Louise worked at Poole Pottery before joining Cornish Enamels.

These enamelled thimbles are based over brass and occasionally copper, and even over silver (The Thimble Guild offered some of the Cornish Enamels thimbles with a choice of brass or silver). The thimble brass bezels have applied 22ct gold-plate for the bands.

Thimbles are 21mm in height making them dainty little creations.

In keeping with their stylish thimbles, Cornish Enamels offered their thimbles in plush thimble cases. They are lettered "Cornish Enamels of Helston" in gold in the inner lid. If in fact the thimbles aren't always marked within the thimbles with their identifying maker's mark, keeping the thimble box with the thimble makes it imperative for future identification.



Now it seems that not all Cornish Enamels thimbles were handpainted. Maybe TTG only commissioned the handpainted range from Cornish Enamels?

There are those with decals, with no handpainting. I will list these separately to avoid confusing them with the handpainted range of thimbles.

I have arranged the Cornish Enamels thimbles alphabetically within their section by their descriptive name – with the name allocated by the marketing department of TTG.

As you will see, many of the designs are abstract.

Where there is no name from a catalogue entry, I will list them separately after the named thimbles, in no order until a name is forthcoming.

Being handpainted there will be variety in each thimble. Tho they were issued in limited quantities, I will show all photos that come my way.

Many were limited editions.

for other enamelled thimble topics see:

British modern enamelled thimbles

Crummles enamelled thimbles

Graham Payne handpainted thimbles

Peter Swingler handpainted thimbles

Handpainted thimbles (named)



Aurora Borealis

all round design

TTG February 1996

limited to **200**

"The technical description of auroras is that they are thought to be caused by high-speed particles from the sun excited to luminosity after colliding with air molecules. Somehow this does not adequately describe the incredible beauty of this amazing phenomenon. The colours and shapes swirl and dance."

These five thimbles have biblical scenes (not identified so I've used a descriptive title) featuring Jesus
are there others?



woman at the well
signed **LL** (Louise Lazarowicz)



signed **TW** (Tristin Way)



healing a blind man (i)
signed **TW** (Tristin Way)



healing a blind man (ii)
signed **TW** (Tristin Way)



loaves and fishes
signed **LL** (Louise Lazarowicz)



walking on water
signed **LL** (Louise Lazarowicz)



signed **TW** (Tristin Way)



preaching
signed **LL** (Louise Lazarowicz)



blue Dutch scene
Het Vingerhoedje (Netherlands) 1, 1998
probably made for de Nederlands-Belgische vingerhoedclub



Birds of Britain – set of six
TTG April 1996



Blue Tit



Collared Dove



Greenfinch



Kingfisher

TW (Tristin Way)

one facing right – the other left

R: set with thimble holder



Robin

L: **TW** (Tristin Way) – R: **GF** (Glen Freestone)



Wren

GF (Glen Freestone)



black bird (raven, crow or chough?)

TW (Tristin Way)

enamel over sterling silver



bullfinch

GF (Glen Freestone)
enamel over sterling silver



coastal scene

GF (Glen Freestone)



Copper Sky

all round design

TTG July 1995

copper



Cottage

TW (Tristin Way)



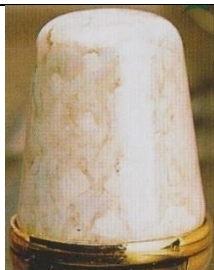
Dendritic Gold

all round design

TTG August 1996

marbled enamel base

"Dendritic is a branching mosslike crystalline structure found in some rocks and minerals. The thimble is inspired by its leafy shapes."



First Fall
all round design
TTG November 1996
brass

"When held in the light has almost a pearlescent effect that reflects the whole spectrum of colours ... the first season's fall of snow."



fruit
apple strawberries etc



Ghostcroft Copper
all round design
TTG February 1997

"Taking its inspiration from Ghostcroft copper it is a marvellous mixture of shiny and matt golds and bronzes, broken up by streaks of white."



Golden Eagle
TTG March 1996
TW (Tristin Way)



goldfinch
TW (Tristin Way)

R: thimble holder set

Cornish Enamels' Cornish engine house mark on egg



goldfinch
LL (Louise Lazarowicz)
enamel over sterling silver



grapevine

LL (Louise Lazarowicz)



Hubble's Thimble

all round design

enamelled white inside

TTG October 1996

brass

"Inspired by the discoveries of the American astronomer, Edwin Power Hubble. It was he who first discovered that there were large-scaled galaxies beyond the Milky Way."



Malachite

all round design

TTG January 1997

"Malachite is a bright green mineral which takes on an extremely high sheen when polished."



Night Sky

all round design



pears



pheasant
LL (Louise Lazarowicz)



poppies
LL (Louise Lazarowicz)
enamel over sterling silver



Rare Sights
all round design
TTG June 1996
limited to **95**

"Entirely covered with the most atmospheric scene of the night sky, it further details two of the rarest sights ever encountered. The Hyakutake comet and the total eclipse of the moon - only possible when the moon crosses the earth's orbital plane at a time when the sun, moon and earth are aligned."



Red Agate
all round design
enamelled red inside
TTG July 1996
copper

"Enamel applied to the copper to to look like some sort of semi-precious stones found in Cornwall."



Rediscovered ... Rhododendron
enamelled white inside
TTG November 1995

"Only found in the Lost Gardens of Heligon, Mevagissey in Cornwall. Rediscovered from the Victorian age, these gardens are being restored to their former glory."



Rembrandt's Self Portrait as the Apostle Paul
GF (Glen Freestone)



Robin Red Breast

TTG November 1996

silver base limited to **50**

copper base limited to **150**

"layers of cobalt blue round with a robin in the recessed panel built up all."



sailing boat with windmill



sailing ship



Saturn

TTG December 1996

silver base limited to **50**

copper base limited to **150**

"layers of cobalt blue built up all round framing a handpainted study of Saturn in a recessed panel"



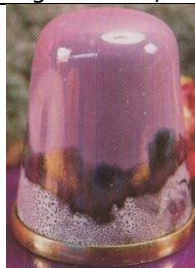
Snow-White



squirrel
LL (Louise Lazarowicz)



Summer Nights
all round design
enamelled white inside
TTG September 1996
"At the end of the day during summer, the sky can be spectacular."



Summer Storm
all round design
TTG March 1997
brass
"Summer can provide with some wonderful weather. It can also conjure up the most amazing storms. Suddenly, if by magic, the storm clouds gather, the sky darkens over and the heavens open."



Swallow
with matching egg thimble holder



Winter Storm
TTG December 1995
copper

"It has been enamelled four times with white enamel, before being handpainted in a combination of gold based paints and lustres."



Windmill

TTG March 1996

R: De Vingerhoed nieuws 2006



LL (Louise Lazarowicz)



Winter Sky

all round design

TTG January 1996

limited to **200**

"It conjures up the image of a cold winter's night when the sky changes every second and the light plays tricks with your eyes."



Wren

TW (Tristan Way) [indistinct signature]

enamel over sterling silver



Wren

like some of the other enamellers, CE have produced this matching thimble case with the thimble
an example of the CE certificate showing Cornish engine house symbol on certificate

Handpainted thimbles (unnamed)

These may be other views of the already named thimbles above



TW (Tristan Way)
enamel over sterling silver
The Thimble Guild (TTG) Birmingham 1996



all round design



all round design



all round design



all round design



all round design
pale green enamelling inside



all round design
P J Walter (Germany) catalogue October 1996
enamel over sterling silver

Decaled thimbles

The Country Diary of an Edwardian Lady



Edith Holden



Autumn
Edith Holden



Summer
Edith Holden

Other merchandise



oval trinket box



pill box



set of napkin rings and salt and pepper

The founder of Cornish Enamels was John B Cookson – I have no date of this or any other details.

References

The Thimble Guild. Catalogues 1995-1997
Het Vingerhoedje 1, 1998

Contributors

Wendi Aguiar | Pawel Brzyski | Linda Heggs | Wolf-Dieter Scholz | Marina Shcherbatyuk | Irene Schwall
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This listing of Cornish Enamels thimbles does not purport to be complete or accurate in all aspects.
Rather it invites comment and contribution to add to our knowledge. My thanks to the contributors.

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February 2021