



[Fig 1] Grimble's Vinegar Bottles Color Run. Circa 1860–1880. Hefty bottles. Heights 9 inches, Base diameters 3 3/4 inches. Each bottle has seven Gothic arches and five shoulder–neck rings. The bottles were blown in a two-piece mold with a dome-shaped “post bottom” (there is no seam across the base) and a separate base plate.² [See Fig 6 Right] The author is unaware of examples with a color match between the stopper and bottle. Note the two styles of collars. Collection of Dan Tibert. Formerly collection of the author.

CATHEDRAL COLOR RUN

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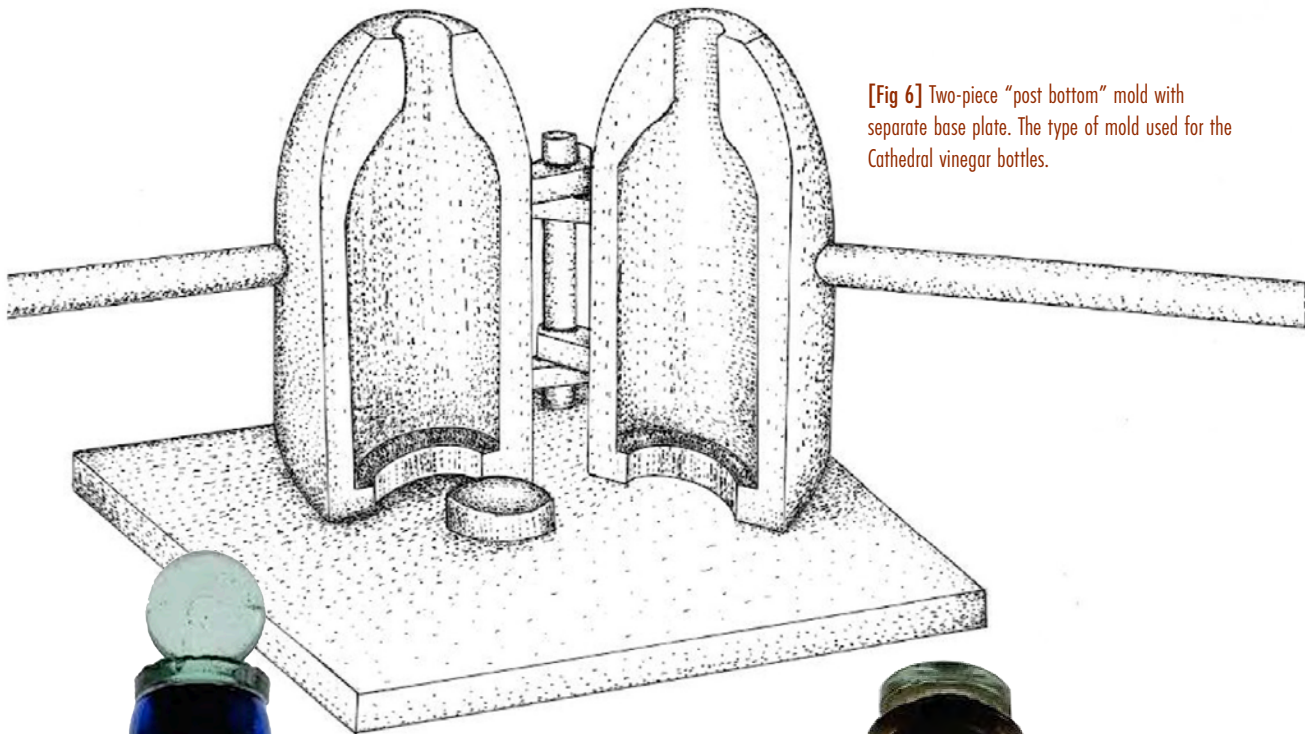
Acknowledgments: I thank my long-time friend, Dan Tibert, for allowing me to borrow and photograph his four cathedral bottles for this article. I also extend my gratitude to another long-time friend, Sam Fuller, for his assistance with the photography.

Introduction: In a couple of recent online bottle auctions, a bottle like the one on the left in Figure 2 was described as a whiskey bottle, possibly American. In truth, the bottle is of English origin and contained vinegar brewed by Grimble's Cider & Vinegar Ltd., the company's current name. These four stunning bottles, identical except for color, are called Cathedral or Gothic vinegar bottles and are described in the captions for Figures 1–5. All measurements are in inches to the nearest 1/8 of an inch.

[Fig 2 Left] Cobalt blue Grimble's bottle. The light sapphire blue stopper is not original. The tapered collar with ring lip finish² is applied.

[Fig 3 Right] Medium amber Grimble's bottle. The ground clear stopper fits perfectly and appears to be original. The tapered collar with ring lip finish² is applied.





[Fig 6] Two-piece "post bottom" mold with separate base plate. The type of mold used for the Cathedral vinegar bottles.

[Fig 4 Right] Sapphire blue Grimble's bottle. The aqua stopper sits in a cork cylinder and appears to be original. The tapered collar with ring lip finish² is applied.



[Fig 5 Right] Honey amber Grimble's bottle. The cork covered aqua stopper is not original. The collared ring lip finish² or a variation of the stove pipe lip finish² is applied.



HISTORY OF GRIMBLE & Co.⁵

Initially located on Albany Street in London, the company was founded by William Grimble (Unfortunately, the author does not have any basic information about him to positively identify his vital records or his image by querying gov.uk/bmdcertificates, myheritage.com, ancestry.com or by a Google search), a gin distiller by trade, who in 1840 attempted a novel and unorthodox method of brewing vinegar by using leftovers from his gin production. He formed a partnership with Sir Felix Booth, another distiller, and set up a business at Cumberland Market in London. [See Figs 7 and 8] The venture was unsuccessful so they turned to a more conventional method of brewing vinegar.



[Fig 7] Advertisement, Grimble & Co. Vinegar Works.



[Fig 8] Cumberland Market. The location of Grimble's first factory that was rebuilt after a fire in 1864.

In 1861, Rothwell Pouncett, a nephew of William Grimble, assumed control of the business. However, in 1864, a fire destroyed the fledgling company. Undaunted, the venture capitalists rebuilt a larger facility in said year. Captain John G. Malcolmson, William Grimble's son-in-law, joined the business. From 1869 and throughout World War I, the now-successful company supplied both the military and the general public.

In 1878—as is often the case with family businesses—Captain James G. Malcolmson, the son of John G., and also Ivor Forbes Malcolmson, the younger brother of James G., assumed roles in the thriving company. By 1903, the company opened a branch in Leith, Scotland. Furthermore, it is said that Grimble & Co. were suppliers to Captain John Scott on his ill-fated journey to the North Pole.

Grimble & Co. acquired the Scottish firm, Edinburgh Malt Vinegar Co. Ltd. on Ballantyne Road, but in 1917 they moved to a larger facility on James Street. [Fig 9] In 1928, Grimble & Co. merged with Beaufoy & Co. London, England—founded by Mark Beaufoy (1718-1782)³ [Fig 10]—and incorporated as Beaufoy, Grimble & Co. Ltd. Subsequently, in 1931, the company became a subsidiary of British Vinegars Ltd. of Cannon Place, London. In 1981, the company closed its bottling plant in Edin-

burgh and, in April 1983, they closed all facets of their business in Leith, Scotland in order to fully concentrate on their operations in England. The company is still in business today.



[Fig 9] The Grimble & Co. Factory in Edinburgh, Scotland. This 1952 photo is of the plant located on James Street.



[Fig 10] An engraving of Mark Beaufoy, by Valentine Green. In 1928, Grimble & Co. merged with Beaufoy & Co.

GRIMBLE & Co.'s PRODUCTS

Apples, of course, are the main ingredient for making Grimble's cider vinegar. The cider is allowed to mature in traditional barrels⁷. The company likes to experiment with different flavors and infusions⁷ in vinegars and wines. Some of the flavors are Walnut Cider, Perry Pear, Honey Wine, Black Currant, Smoked Garlic and Shallots, and Black Truffle. [See Figs 11, 12 and 13 next page]

However, Grimble's is most famous for its real Scottish malt vinegar. Malt vinegar is made as follows:⁴

1. The process begins by soaking grains of barley in water causing them to germinate;
2. The grains are dried by toasting and then grinding them into a starchy powder which is fermented and brewed into an ale (the dried grains are called malt barley);
3. A second fermentation process turns the ale into vinegar now called malt vinegar;
4. Finally, the malt vinegar is briefly aged which contributes to its tartness.

Because of malt vinegar's tart flavor, Grimble's claims that it is the best vinegar for splashing onto your fish and chips⁷. Yum!



[Fig 11] Group of Grimble's flavored cider vinegar and wine bottles.



[Fig 12] Group of Grimble's Black Truffle Vinegar bottles.



[Fig 13] Group of Grimble's plain cider vinegar bottles.

ADDITIONAL GRIMBLE BOTTLES

As well as plain glass bottles, the English and the Australians are well-known for making very fancy and strikingly beautiful bottles for salad oils and vinegars. The bottles in Figures 14 through 17 are known Grimble's bottles and the beautiful bottle in Figure 18 may be his also.

[Fig 14 Right] Cobalt blue Grimble's bottle. The bottle has the diamond pattern with a stopper that appears to be original and is identical to the stopper in Figure 3. The bottle has a laid-on ring lip finish² and dates circa 1880s.



[Fig 16 Right] Grimble's bottle partial label. The embossing on the bottle is not legible but there is enough of the label present to see that it is quite similar to the label in Figure 15. Since the last line on the label reads CUMBERLAND MARKET LONDON and the lip finish is an applied tapered collar with ring¹, the bottle dates from 1860 to 1864 or later noting that the first plant at this location burned in 1864 but was rebuilt.



[Fig 15 Bottom Right] Grimble's bottle full label⁶. Since the bottle has an integral tapered collar there are no mold seams and the city on the label is LEITH, the bottle dates from 1903 to circa 1920. The four gold medals are from New Zealand in 1882, Calcutta in 1884, New Orleans in 1884-1885 and Paris in 1895. The bottle is about 13 inches tall. Unfortunately, the writing underneath the boar's head trademark is not legible.



CONCLUSION

It is the author's hope that this article will spark interest in the often-overlooked and under-appreciated category of food bottles. If you like beautiful colors, a variety of shapes, interesting and pictorial embossing, fancy labels, early pontiled bottles or jars and are not averse to seeking out some examples from other countries, you will find it all in this area of collecting at prices which do not break the bank. After all, we love food so take a closer look at their containers which were designed to catch your eye and invite you to make a purchase. Happy collecting!



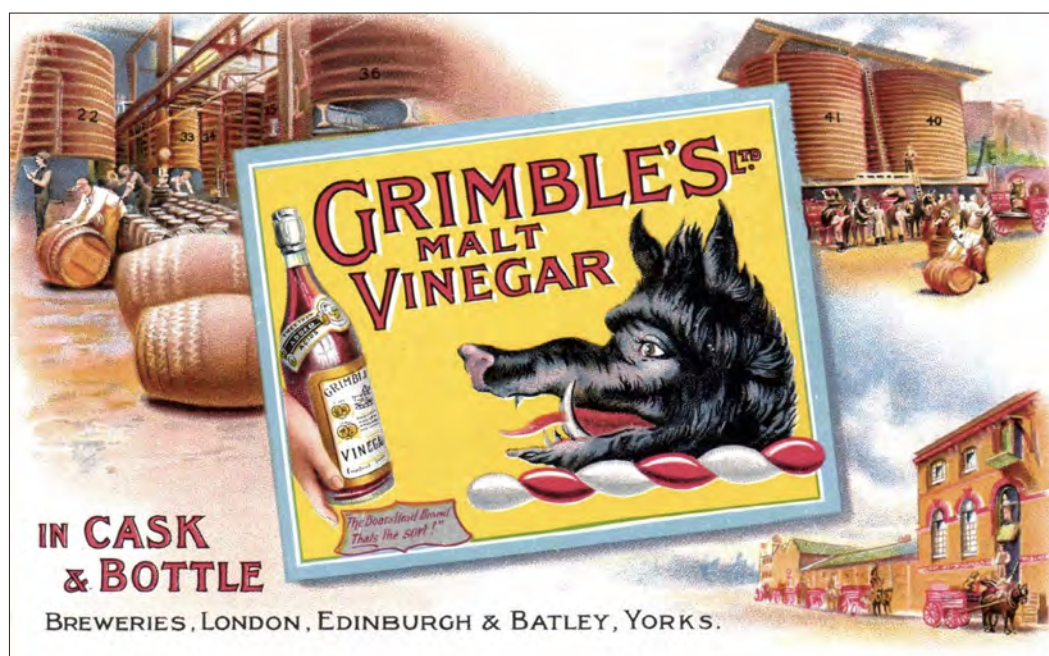
[Fig 17] Trademark of Grimble & Co. Ltd.



[Fig 15 Left] Green Grimble's bottle¹. The bottle has a diamond pattern and a laid-on ring lip finish². The bottle dates circa 1880s.



[Fig 16 Right] Blue-green aquamarine Grimble's bottle. The thistles suggest that the bottle is very possibly one Grimble used. The bottle has an applied straight collar or packer lip finish² and dates 1860 to 1880.



[Fig 18] Grimble's Malt Vinegar advertising.

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