



**A RARE DRESSING TABLE CLOCK BY THOMAS
COLE**

Dimensions: 4.5 in / 11.5 cm

10410



A Rare Dressing Table Clock
by Thomas Cole

Retailed by C.F. Hancock

Designed to act as a ring or cuff link holder, this rare and finely engraved two-part gilt-brass ball clock by Thomas Cole was retailed by Charles Frederick Hancock. The lower section forms a circular tray with foliate engraving to the edge and three shaped supports beneath a similarly decorated bowl. The upper section houses the [clock](#) movement, the domed lid engraved with delicate foliate scrolls and floral motifs. The interior reveals a small glass bowl, suggesting the dual function of this piece as a ring or cufflink container for the [dressing table](#).

The silvered dial is engraved with running foliates to the border and signed, with Roman numerals and blued steel hands. The movement, of eight-day duration, powered by a spring barrel and

regulated by a lever escapement. Winding is accessed by removing the upper section. Original keys present. The dial signed 'C F Hancock London.'

English, circa 1855

[Thomas Cole](#) (1800-1864)

Son of James and Catherine Cole, Thomas Cole was born in Nether Stowey, Somerset, and was the younger brother of the clockmaker James Ferguson Cole. Thomas's history and works are fully recorded in 'Thomas Cole & Victorian Clockmaking' by John B. Hawkins, published in 1975, in Sydney.

Known as a specialist in making decorative timepieces of the highest quality, Cole established himself in London and, by 1848, was working in Clerkenwell as a "designer" and maker of ornamental clocks. His reputation for artistry and fine craftsmanship grew, leading to his exhibition at the Great Exhibition at the Crystal Palace in 1851, where he displayed a number of elaborate items. He later received an 'honourable mention' at the Paris Exhibition of 1855 and was awarded a medal for "excellence of taste and design" at the London 1862 International Exposition. His work was praised by critics and foreign visitors for its "beauty of design" and "general excellence of workmanship." Thomas Cole was also elected to the Royal Society of Arts in 1861. He died on January 3, 1864.

Charles Frederick Hancock (1807-1891) was formerly a partner in Storr & Mortimer before founding his own firm on 1 January 1849 at the corner of Bruton Street and New Bond Street, London. As successor to a celebrated line of goldsmiths and jewellers serving the principal sovereigns of Europe, Hancock established a manufactory adjacent to his premises, enabling the production of refined works of art and silver plate. He exhibited at the Great Exhibition of 1851, and subsequently in Paris (1867) and Vienna (1873), receiving numerous accolades, including the Emperors' Gold Medal for Science and Art. In 1856, Hancock was awarded the commission to design and produce the Victoria Cross, a responsibility that remains with the firm to this day.

Literature:

J. Culme, *The Directory of Gold & Silversmiths, Jewellers and Allied Trades 1838-1914*, Woodbridge, 1987.

Literature:

See Hawkins, J., *Survey of Cole Clocks, Part II* (2025) p. 237 for a related numbered clock.