

Australian handpainted thimbles and sewing tools

1973-2014

Thimbles of Australia was published in 1998. In the succeeding twenty years many new handpainters have come to light. I have no way of sharing these new finds, other than creating a new Learn More About ... Thimbles topic.

This topic will broaden out from traditional handpainted china and porcelain – by adding handpainted wood – and exchanging a paintbrush for a stylus or a poker or pyrography tool, all handpainted thimbles are included together, no matter what the artist has used to hand decorate the thimbles, nor the medium on which the artwork is created: wood china, papier-mâché, ivory etc.

Porcelain painting has a large following in Australia and miniature painting on thimbles requires great skill: that surface is small. Australian fauna is a difficult subject to capture accurately in miniature (rarely are kangaroos painted and just a few koalas), so one tends to find floral handpainted thimbles in the main. Artists have been encouraged to sign their works and signed handpainted thimbles are eagerly sought after.

The blank thimbles first used in china painting tend to be squat in shape with a matt finish and were imported from Japan and Czechoslovakia.

With the regular scarcity of blank thimbles to paint, artists turned their hand to making their own blank thimbles – or used wooden thimbles until the supply became plentiful.

Is there a preference for blank porcelain/wooden thimbles to have a gloss or matt finish?
Both surfaces are seen throughout this topic.

Many of these artists began as hobbyists.

Australia's Bicentenary in 1988 was the catalyst for a growing interest in Australiana. Those that became passionate about their hobby turned it into a small business (Lynn Richards and Val de Vries etc). This necessitated marketing and sales. Thimble mail order catalogues or small shops and wholesalers flourished in Australia to get these handpainted thimbles from the artist to thimble collector. They would also commission thimbles.

Beryl Warne (her shop *Thimble Collections* in Melbourne 1983-1986)

Margaret and Jihl Berry (*Thimble Collections* Mt Eliza Victoria 1986-1990)

Yvonne Varey (*Gallery One* wholesaler Perth/Melbourne 1985-2014)

Barbara Kelly (*The Thimble Collector* Hamilton in Newcastle 1986-1993)

Sue Gowan (*Thimbleselect* 1988-2020 The Gap Queensland)

Dorothy Andrews (*Thimbella* Meadows near Adelaide 1985-2012)

Helen Burgin (*Addaline Miniatures* Sydney 1980s-1994)

Ann and Dick Wallace (*Pan Arts* Sydney thimble wholesalers 1980s-2010s – who had contacts with *Thimble Collectors Guild* in Scotland, which saw Australian thimbles disseminated worldwide).

Handpainted thimbles were as popular in the USA, as here. Collectors should be aware that US handpainted thimbles are identical in shape to those used by Australian thimble handpainters in the 1980s. Unless the subject is Australian or has a local place marking, it may not be an Australian handpainted thimble. And some may inadvertently have slipped in here

The global financial crisis of 2008 saw the beginning of the end for Australian thimble handpainters – markets disappeared as collectors slowed their quest for all thimbles.

Most of these artists no longer paint thimbles, but there will be a whole new crop to chase from these pages ...

I will combine all known artists who handpainted thimbles in one alphabetical sequence (by surname or by the first initial if those are the only marks): no matter on which medium they painted or decorated.

Where a date is lettered in the thimble, this is included. The earliest found is 1973, 2014 is the latest dated thimble.

This topic does **not** include overseas artists who painted thimbles with Australian themes (some of whom were included in *Thimbles of Australia*) – Gail Boekel - Dunheved – Heirloom Editions – Anya Kooiwind Klima – Heather McLean - Julie Menzies - Graham Payne – Royal Worcester - Russell and Creed White Heron – Virginia Wellman (Ginnie).

If you are a thimble painter, please share any further details – thimble collectors please share your photos of Australian handpainted thimbles or makers that have been omitted.

137 Australian handpainters are listed.

When only the initials are shown they are filed by the last initial i.e. BLS is shown at the beginning of the S sequence.

I am aware of the following Australian china thimble painters - I just don't have a photo
If you have one – please share.

J B Andrews Sydney | M Bate 1997 sold in Georges Melbourne | Jo Bedingfield Sydney 1987
Helen Brown Newcastle 1992 (roses) | N Carriage Canberra (birds) | Helen Davies | Donna Driver
Kitty Drok | N Faris | Margaret Faulks | L Forster Newcastle NSW 1992 | J Fraser | N Freeman | Jay Gabb
W Gavan | Alva Gooden Perth 1980s | Olive Gumley | Marilyn Hulbert | Beryl Job 1977
Melva Keeley 1977 | Lyn Larkin | D Lee Canberra 1985 | N Main 1981 | I Matthews | Carol McCormack
D Mitchell | Lorna Mitchell | J Moyle | J Newton NSW | Joy Noel Brisbane (wattle 1996) | L Pearson
Grace Phillips | S Rains | Gillem (Edna) Reid New Norfolk Tasmania | Jan Schubert Adelaide 1980s
C Simpson | I Stephens | Heather Taylor Perth | Elva Tesdarieo | P Tuck | M Welch Gunnedah NSW
D Young 1978

Before around 2000, a grass trees were known as a blackboy. If this term was used on the thimble, I have shown it but the correct name is a grass tree (xanthorrhoea).

I have used inverted commas to show any lettering on the thimbles – the rest are my own descriptions for collectors who are not familiar with Australian flora and fauna.

There are very few handpainted Australian sewing tools so it makes sense to include with the painter's thimbles.

For other Australian thimble topics see:

Australian advertising thimbles
Australian modern sterling silver thimble and sewing tools makers
Australia's Elfin thimbles
Sydney Opera House thimbles

For other handpainted thimble topics see:

British modern handpainted thimbles
Gerald Delaney handpainted thimbles
Graham Payne handpainted thimbles
Jasper's of Yorkshire handpainted thimbles
Royal Worcester thimble painters

Handpainted thimbles

Pat Adam

CHINA/PORCELAIN

Adelaide

Pat Adam is a china painter of some renown. Her fine brushwork of mini flowers and native animals is often found on thimbles. Pat was a member of South Australian Digitabulists Society



'AUSTRALIAN KOALA'



'10TH ANNIVERSARY
S.A.D.S. 1998'



'S.A.D.S. EST. 1988
STH. AUSTRALIA'
painted on Dorothy Andrews'
porcelain thimbles



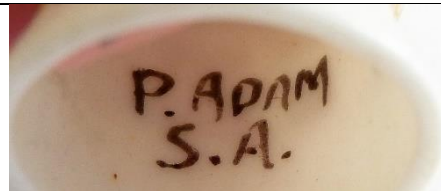
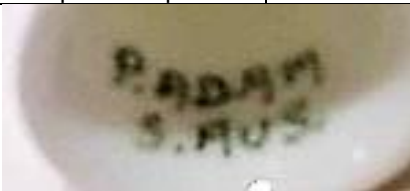
Sturt desert pea bouquet



owl



'AUSTRALIAN WATTLE'



Jessie Adams

PORCELAIN



Jo Allen

PORCELAIN

Mackay, Queensland

her thimble is signed on the outside



gum flowers



Dot Andrews

PORCELAIN

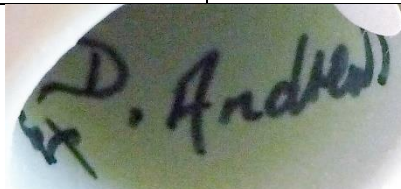
Meadows, South Australia

Dot sold thimbles thru her mail order thimble catalogue, *Thimbella*. She was a potter and created unglazed porcelain blank thimbles for sale to handpainters, at her Paris Creek Pottery. She made them in green, blue, apricot, pink, lilac, off-white and white

You may notice how many of Australian thimble artists originated in South Australia. And for this, there is only one person to acknowledge. Dot worked tirelessly, encouraging every handpainter she met to try thimble painting: with great success



'Bottlebrush Australia'



Jo Armstrong

PORCELAIN



blue wren

A Arnold
PORCELAIN
Western Australia



'Kangaroo Paw'
1983



'Leschenaultia'
1983



H.B.
PORCELAIN



Kingfisher



Rainbow lorikeet



Diane Baker
PORCELAIN



'Blackboy'

Irene Barnett

STONEWARE

North Nowra, New South Wales

Irene Barnett is the originator of Chelsea Girl Stoneware. Irene started pottery in 1979 after being unsuccessful in finding a potter to make cream dishes or pots for the Tearooms she and her husband ran at the Cambewarra Lookout NSW.

This led to creating their own souvenirs of stoneware and her fine white matt stoneware thimbles resulted. They all have 'Cambewarra Lookout NSW' printed on the thimbles. Irene made between 75 and 100 of these thimbles. From 1990, no further thimbles were produced

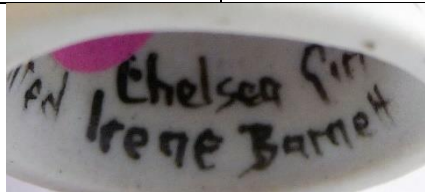
Other designs she painted were blue wren, waratah, Kangaroo Valley Bridge, map of Australia and a few kangaroo



'Cambewarra Lookout N.S.W'
with kookaburra



koalas



Jocelyn Bayliss

PORCELAIN

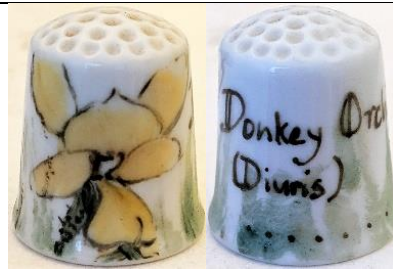
Queensland



Christmas Bells
1982



'Cooktown Orchid
(Dendrobium Bigibbum)'
1982



'Donkey Orchid (Diurnis)'



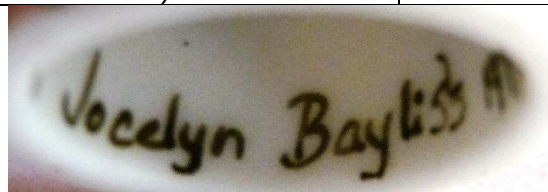
'Pink Boronia'
1979



'Pink Boronia (Boronia Muelleri)'



'B...'



**Beate's
PORCELAIN**

North Queensland

Beate trained as a master painter at Royal Berlin Porcelain. She arrived from Germany to settle in Sydney. Beate Wickert imported porcelain blanks from Limoges. Dot Andrews asked her if she would paint thimbles. These thimbles were all stock items built up over the years. Her apices are painted gold. She also undertook commissions.



Beate was no longer able to procure quality blank porcelain thimbles to paint. Ceased 2006.





Black Rose



Blue Wren



Green Rose



commission - M



Musical



Pansie Blue Stripe



pink rose



early unsigned



early unsigned



Pansie Blue Stripe button



Bow button



Forget-me-not button



button



Pansie Blue Stripe needleholder



Pansie Blue Stripe thimble holder



Blue Diamond needlecase



Forget-Me-Not thimble holder



Jamie Bell (JB)
 WHALE TOOTH IVORY
 Albany WA



'Running Home'
 scrimshaw sailing ships

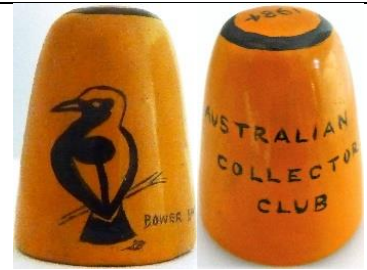
Shirley Bennett
 PAPIER-MACHÉ
 Apollo Bay, Victoria

The late Hal Bennett created a papier-mâché thimble in 1979, which led to a cottage industry. Hal, an instrument maker. They traded under the name Haley, a combination of both their names. Approximately 800 thimbles were produced by the Bennetts. Shirley, a talented artist, did all the artwork and handpainted the thimbles. A feature of Shirley's artwork is that the apex is hand decorated. They all have a sticky label inside. Rarely do the thimbles bear Shirley's initials. A novel idea on a many of the thimbles was an Australian opal set into the apex

Over 800 Haley thimbles were made over a period of six years - till 1985



'AUSTRALIA'
 platypus - emu



'BOWER BIRD AUSTRALIAN
 COLLECTORS CLUB'
 1984



emu with leaves
 '26.8.80'



goanna



kangaroo
 'AUSTRALIA'



kangaroo
 '1985
 AUSTRALIA'
 opal in apex



kangaroo - koala



koalas
 'AUSTRALIA'



koala



koala - boomerang
'AUSTRALIA'



koala



koala
'1985
AUSTRALIA'
opal in apex



Aboriginal design
b&w photo



opal in apex



mine shaft - spades
opal in apex



'CLIFF YOUNG BEECH
FOREST'



yacht



Marylyn Berrington
PORCELAIN



'Spider Orchid'

L Betts (LB)
PORCELAIN



emu with chicks, kangaroo
and gumtree
1982



Uluru (Ayer's Rock)
1983



bird



black swan and cygnets



Budgies
signed L Betts



cherries



grass tree
signed L Betts



kangaroo



kangaroo



kangaroos



koala



owl



flower



flower



L; used more frequently 1982-1984

Doug Birrell

WOOD

Victoria

Doug Birrell may be familiar to thimble collectors in Australia as the past editor of the *Needlework Tool Collectors Society of Australia Newsletter*. Doug came to needlework tools through his interest in wood turning and carving. He was aware that wooden thimbles must not be crudely proportioned, poorly sanded or coated in heavy gloss finish - to catch the eye of the collector or tourist



Hindenloopen style



Hindenloopen style



pyrography
Theo Thimble



Blaskett

CHINA



kookaburra



T Bloomfield

PORCELAIN



'1879 WENTWORTH GAOL'



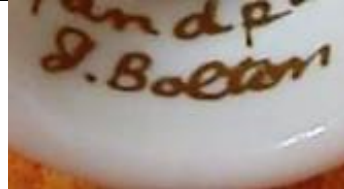
Jean Bolton

PORCELAIN

her apices are handpainted gold



'Japanese GARDEN COWRA Australia'



Elaine Boyd

WOOD

Perth

woodturner – using pyrography



koala

Marjorie Brook (MB)

PORCELAIN

South Australia

Marjorie matched her rims and apices in matching colours



'Port Elliot'



'Port Elliot'
1986



'Port Elliot'
1988



'Victor Harbour'



'Victor Harbour'



seagulls



Pat Brown (P Brown)

CHINA/PORCELAIN

Adelaide

Pat was a thimble collector. Some of her apices are painted gold
1980s



Geraldton wax

H Brunton

PORCELAIN

Adelaide

1980s



kookaburra



Pamela Buchanan

PORCELAIN



parrot
gold apex

Pam Buck
PORCELAIN
Hahndorf, South Australia
signed on thimble's outer side



violet
b&w photo

T Bulley
PORCELAIN



kangaroo paw

Joy Cakebush
PORCELAIN
Broken Hill, New South Wales



'Broken Hill'

Helen L Callander (H.L.C.)
PORCELAIN
South Australia
most of her apexes are painted gold
1980s



'KOOKABURRA GUM LEAVES'



'MOONTA S.A.'
miner



'MOONTA S.A.'
1991
miner



miner's cottage



'KADINA S.A.'



'LITTLE CORNWALL SA'



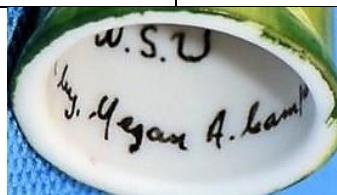
Megan A Campbell
PORCELAIN
Sydney



flannel flower

no photo

Bottlebrush
1981



Gwennyth Campbell-Stewart
PORCELAIN
Brisbane



'Leschenaultia'



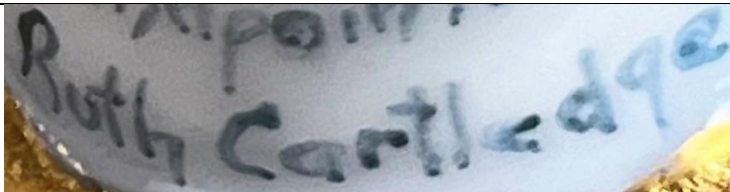
'Forget me nots'
October 1994



Ruth Cartledge
CHINA



blue wren
gold apex and gold rim
1983



Peg Christie
PORCELAIN
Brisbane

This artist paints matching rims. The rim is also gold painted at the open edge of the thimble



'Sunflower
Queensland'



'Poinsettia
Queensland'



'Viola
Hederacea'



'Koala Australia'



'Vanilla Lily'



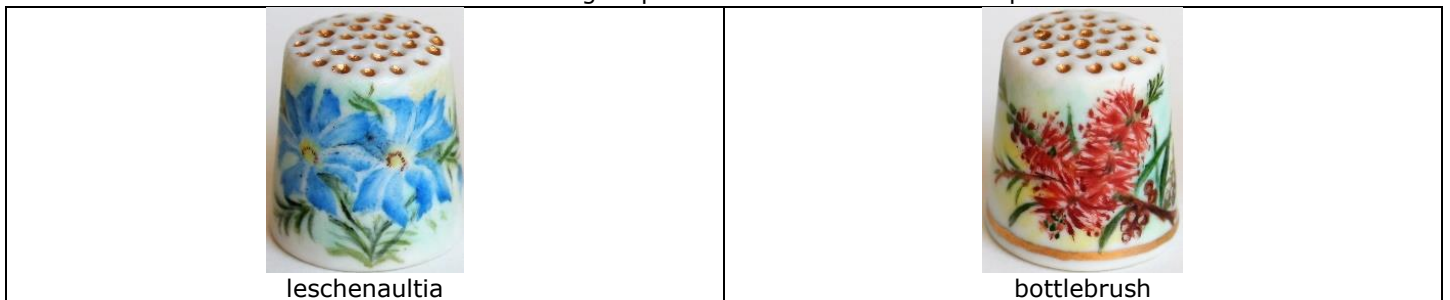
Lisa Clarke
WOOD

In her Thimbella catalogue of 1994, Dorothy Andrews offered for sale handpainted wooden Herron thimbles by Lisa Clarke. The topics are named along the outer rim, in lower case lettering .



P Coldbeck
PORCELAIN

this artist uses gold paint for the indentations on apex



Mary Covill
PORCELAIN



**A Craigie
PORCELAIN**



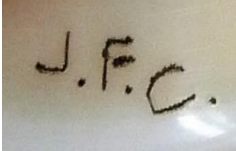



gold painted apex



James Cumberland-Brown (J.F.C.) WA

James is renowned for his scrimshaw. He acquired a great quantity of Sperm Whale teeth before the sale of whale ivory was banned in 1972. This miniaturist, from the Royal School of Fine Arts, has created exquisite scrimshaw thimbles. The scenes are carved with a probe or sharpened nail and then black oil paint is rubbed into the carving, to bring them to life. The thimbles were supplied with a certificate proclaiming 'This is to certify that this tooth was taken off the West Australian Coast prior to 1972'.

James turns the thimbles himself and the shape varies from thimble to thimble. Originally residing in York, Western Australia, where visitors to 'Hillside' could watch this artist at work, he then moved to East Fremantle. James died in 2003.

	<p>Certificate of Authenticity</p> <p>THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THIS SCRIMSHAW WAS CREATED BY JAMES CUMBERLAND-BROWN IN HIS STUDIO AT "HILLSIDE", YORK, WESTERN AUSTRALIA.</p> <p>SIGNED: </p>	<p>THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THIS TOOTH WAS TAKEN OFF THE WEST AUSTRALIAN COAST PRIOR TO 1972</p> <p>SIGNED: </p> <p>DESCRIPTION OF PIECE <i>Thimble with slip end with house</i></p>
		
<p>JCB York W.A. 1991</p>		

Fiona Curry (FC)
WOOD
Melbourne
The Deepings Woodturner
Tasmania
who made the huon pine blanks
see also: Jill Roberts

 <p>'CORROBOREE 90' Huon pine limited to 150 R: b&w photo</p>	 <p>gumnuts pyrography mini size</p>	 <p>gumnuts pyrography</p>
		

Cynthia
PORCELAIN
Toowoomba, Queensland

<p>no photo</p> <p>'Barn owl'</p>	<p>no photo</p> <p>'Blue wren'</p>	<p>no photo</p> <p>'Eastern spinebill'</p>	 <p>'Stilt'</p>
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Rita Daniel (RD) / Rachel Dettmann (rd)
CHINA

Kyneton, Victoria

Originally from Worcestershire in England, Rita and Peter Daniel settled in Australia in 1983. There they founded the Kyneton Fine China Studio in 1987. Peter made thimble moulds and Rita is an artist of exceptional talent having started in the Royal Worcester training school at the age of 17

In 1995 Kyneton Fine China launched a bone china range of thimbles. Using clay imported from England, the thimbles are made in Kyneton. Rita's earlier thimbles have a painted dark cobalt blue background, by Rita Daniel and more recently by Rachel Dettmann. Each design is limited to **100** thimbles and the thimble is numbered and boxed, with a certificate of authenticity that in turn bears the artist's signature and the number in the series. These were all stock items built up over the years

Thimbles signed on the outside

Rita Daniels retired in 2009 when Kyneton Fine China was sold





koala



'1996'
gumnuts
RD



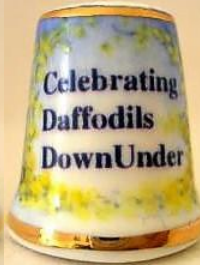
daffodil



daffodils
RD



'2003'
:Celebrating the International Year of Freedom'



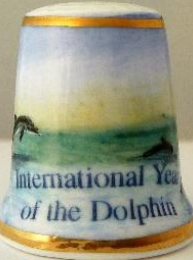
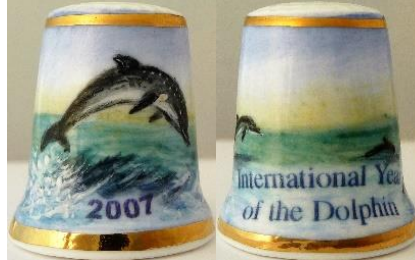
'2004'
'Celebrating Daffodils DownUnder'



'2005'
'Celebrating Australian Wildflowers'
RD



'2006'
'Hanging Rock Central Victoria'
RD



'2007'
'International Year of the Dolphin'
RD



'2008'
'Celebrating Beautiful Banksias'
RD



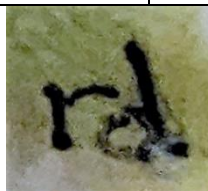
blue wren
rd



kookaburra
rd



Rita Daniel (upper case)



Rachel Dettmann (lower case)



Rita Daniel

Dante
PORCELAIN
gold painted apex



'Australian wattle'

no photo

Forget-me-nots



violet



M Day

WOOD
signed







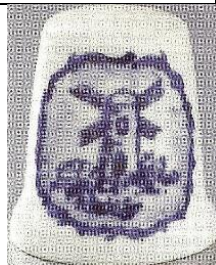




'Emu'
pyrography
limited edition of **99**
TTG January 1986

Val de Vries
 CHINA – METAL - WOOD
 Clare, South Australia

Val de Vries has been a china painter for forty years. This includes teaching china painting. Val began painting thimbles in earnest when she was commissioned by The Thimble Guild in Scotland in 1999 to produce her handpainted range of china thimbles

Some of her apexes are handpainted gold. Many thimbles are dated + ©. Some have a lustre finish. She also undertook thimble commissions

Val turned to painting china thimbles when there was a scarcity. Some of Val's earliest works are painted on wood

 <p>lattice 2002</p>	 <p>pansies</p>	 <p>agate – rhodonite TTG August 2004</p>		
 <p>2003</p>		 <p>agate TTG June 2004</p>	 <p>agate - bloodstone TTG December 2004</p>	
 <p>agate – spider web turquoise TTG November 2004</p>	 <p>agate – lazulite TTG September 2004</p>	 <p>Cornelli work TTG June 2003</p>	 <p>Delft</p>	 <p>amaryllis TTG August 2005</p>
 <p>apples TTG June 2002</p>	 <p>poppies 2006</p>	 <p>candle wood</p>	 <p>Christmas 2001</p>	 <p>'... Christmas' 2001</p>
 <p>Christmas 2002</p>	 <p>'Christmas 2003'</p>	 <p>Christmas 2005</p>	 <p>Christmas</p>	

				
santa wood	Easter	Easter	Floral basket TTG January2002	Edward and Edwina Bear TTG August 2001
				
	2003 wood	Kangaroo wood TTG June 2002	rose wood	
				
2001	forget-me-nots TTG August 2001	forget-me-nots 2003	forget-me-nots 2008	forget-me-nots metal
				
Roses wood 2008	roses and lace wood TTG January 2003	fuchsia TTG July 2005	gladiolus TTG September 2005	
				
hibiscus TTG January 2006	nasturtium TTG October 2005	koala TTG June 2001	'Mother' 2004	
				
New Year '2002' - '2002 Karl'	'Happy New Year 2004'	pansies	pansies	



pears
TTG February 2002



'Joyce 80 16-2-1922'
2002
commission



pimpernel
TTG February 2004



poppies



poppies
TTG November 2005



strawberries
2003
wood



remembrance poppies
2003



trellis
TTG March 2004



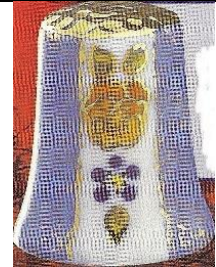
rose



Quilt
'Friendship Star'
2002



roses



roses



patchwork quilt designs – set of 12
2002-2003
name of quilt pattern lettered on verso



spot the dots
wood
TTG May 2004



violets and robbons
TTG February 2005



Uluru
2003



Valentine
TTG February 2004



tulip



violets



2008
wood





thimble holder and needleholder
wood



thimble holder



Gerald Delaney

CHINA
Adelaide

Gerald E. Delaney was one of the foremost ceramic artists in the United Kingdom. He spent long spells in Australia in the 1980s and the early 1990s and painted many thimbles during his stay. Gerald was born in 1933. He studied art at the Worcester Victoria Institute and served a seven-year apprenticeship with the Royal Worcester Porcelain Company between 1948 and 1954 and he returned to Royal Worcester in 1971 until 1973

He specialised initially in fruit designs. Only his thimbles painted whilst he lived in Australia are featured here His apices are painted gold. The rim is also gold painted at the open edge of the thimble



kookaburra



lyre bird



robin



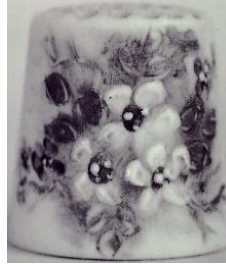
maker's mark

R Dland
 PORCELAIN
 Fremantle, Western Australia



'Kangaroo Paw'

A Duerden
 PORCELAIN
 Mittagong, New South Wales



forget-me-nots
 1988
 b&w photo

Judy Dyer
 PORCELAIN
 Melbourne

Judy's thimbles are signed and dated inside in gold
 she was most prolific in the 1970s



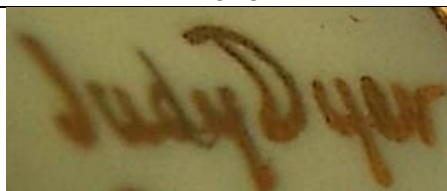
'Spider Flower Nodding Greenhood Bottlebrush'
 1977

no photo

'Bottlebrush Nodding Greenhood Boronia Spider Flower'
 1978



'Christmas Bells Nodding Greenhood Pincushion'
 1979



Elizabeth Endisch (E)

PORCELAIN

Bridgetown, Western Australia

Elizabeth Endisch is well known for her porcelain work. She makes porcelain collectors plates and to hand decorate.

Her most well-known design is based on the Aboriginal dot design

With some persuasion by Sue Gowan in 1989, Endisch made porcelain thimbles for the first time. These were an experiment using her dot design. It proved too time consuming so only four were ever made. Her porcelain thimbles now have a swirled pattern to them. The shape is distinctive with markedly sloping sides and a raised rim. Initially signed with large painted 'E'. Her later thimbles have no maker's marks. The rim is painted green at the open edge of the thimble



b&w photo



Elizabeth

This unique porcelain work of art was designed, hand made, hand painted and inscribed by Elizabeth Endisch of Manjimup, Western Australia.

Elizabeth hand mixes each colour which she applies using brushes made of hair from her dog 'kaz'.

Firing to 1260°C, the decoration fuses to the clay and becomes virtually impossible to erase.

The high degree of skill and unusual 'Australiana' artwork combine to give a work of great beauty and durability.

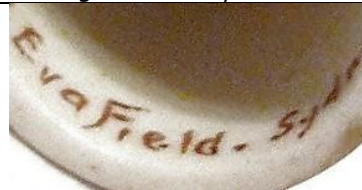
Eva Field

PORCELAIN

Sydney



'Kangaroo & Joey Australia'



Jan Finch
PORCELAIN
signed



'150th Anniversary of the BUSH family 1835-1985'

Perry Fletcher
CHINA



emu

Flora
PORCELAIN



flannel flower - wattle



Ruth Floth
WOOD

Ruth Floth from Central New South Wales coast, has used finely turned wooden thimbles and hand decorated them in a folk-art style. She is known for her handpainted teddy bears on thimbles. Signed



teddy bear
b&w photo

E Formenti
PORCELAIN



Rosalyn Forster
WOOD

Greater Melbourne

Ros is a thimble collector. She painted on thimbles made by Doug Birrell. Unsigned



Sturt's desert pea

violets

lace bobbins

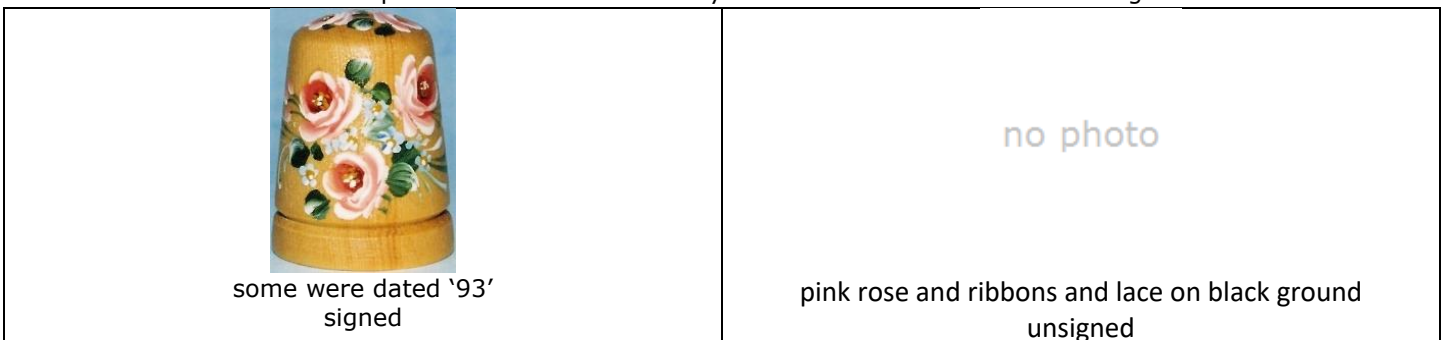
Lyn Foster

WOOD

Newcastle, New South Wales

Lyn Foster is an internationally recognised folk artist. She runs the Foster Folk Art Studio teaching her craft and she has classes in Sydney and lectures and teaches overseas. She handpaints thimbles with her distinctive folk-art painting. This includes decorating both the body of the thimbles and the apex.

The Huon pine thimbles were made by Robert Herron of Tasmania. Unsigned



some were dated '93'
signed

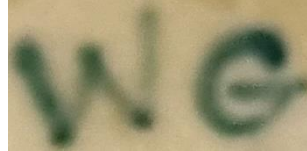
pink rose and ribbons and lace on black ground
unsigned

WG

EARTHENWARE

see also: EDK

paint yourself earthenware kit thimbles



signed in apex with 01 for 2001

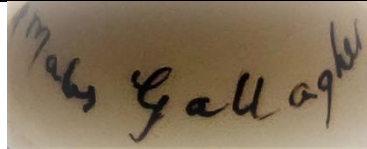
Mabs Gallagher

PORCELAIN

Canberra



waratahs
gold painted apex
1993



J Gamble

PORCELAIN

Sydney

some of her thimbles are dated inside and some signed inside – some on the outside



1988



'Koala'



'Australia Parrots'



'koalas – kookaburra'



Bennelong - boomerang



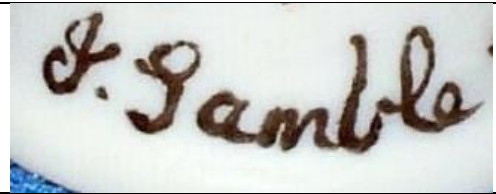
'Koalas'
1988



'Koala' - Sydney Harbour Bridge
1988



grass trees



Gellie
PORCELAIN



wattle



Fay Gosling
PORCELAIN



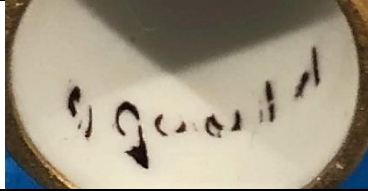
'Gum Blossom'
lustre finish



Georgina Gould
PORCELAIN



bottlebrush



Jen Grenekle (Jen G)
CERAMICS
South Australia

Jen creates her own thimbles and handpaints them



cottage



Gum blossom
'Australia'



koala



ladybirds – two versions



owl



in various colour grounds



J Gregory
PORCELAIN



crocodile
1987

Margaret Greschke (MG)
WOOD

Bob and Margaret Greschke produce fine quality handpainted thimbles. Born in Germany, Bob settled in Australia. Bob is a woodturner, Margaret has handpainted wooden thimbles featuring a range of different designs to *The Thimble Guild* (erroneously named as Greschke, November 1993)

Fay Griffiths

PORCELAIN

Eleebana, New South Wales

Fay is a thimble collector herself and an accomplished miniature painter. Some of her apexes are painted gold some have a lustre finish



1992

BLH
CHINA



'World Expo 88 BRISBANE AUSTRALIA APRIL-OCTOBER 1988'

Althea Hammer

PORCELAIN

Nambucca Heads, New South Wales

I inadvertently named this painter as Althea Hammich in *Thimbles of Australia*



Geraldton wax
yellow painted apex
1992

Margaret Handley

WOOD

Margaret Handley commissioned some finely turned thimbles that were good enough for her to use her skill as a doll artist, to handpaint. Her finely executed roses on an all over painted background will do any thimble collection proud. The apex and the inside of the thimbles are gold painted. Unsigned



b&w photo

C Harris
PORCELAIN



B Haysman
PORCELAIN
South Australia



'Bain Rotunda Clare S.A.'
signed in apex with date 9/81



'Burra'



'St Peter's Cathedral Adelaide Sth Aust'



B Hermel

PORCELAIN

South Australia

Hermel paint flowers. The names of the flowers are lettered in gold along the front rims. The apex and signature is gold painted. The sets of Australian state flowers must have been painted at different times – as shape of thimble changes

1980s



Robert Herron

WOOD

Riverside, Tasmania

Herron has been turning thimbles from Tasmanian timbers since 1980 and he was still actively creating thimbles in November 2018. His thimbles for Australia's Bicentenary are some of the thimbles painted by Herron. Unsigned. His woodturning skills are far better than his handpainting.

see also: Lisa Clarke - Joanna Wigzell - Dianne Williams - Thea Peschar for his other handpainted thimbles

				
				
				
<p>no photo</p> <p>paddleboat for Patina Craft Gallery Echuca</p>				
				

Roma Holland (RH)
PORCELAIN



'Christmas Bells Australia'
pink porcelain



'Kookaburra Australia'
1987



parrot
b&w photo



'Australia 1986'
RH etched into inside edge as well



'White winged fairy wren Australia'
1987
unsigned



initials slope slightly backwards

P Hunter
CHINA

Tanunda, South Australia



'Tanunda'
'96 Barossa



Jean
PORCELAIN



EDK
EARTHENWARE
South Australia



paint yourself earthenware kit thimble

MvK
PORCELAIN



'Hawker'
1990



G Kedzierska (GK)
CHINA
Sydney

These fine quality thimbles are made by Kedzierska and the delicate pastel colours enhance the all over floral painting. The apex indentations are highlighted with fine dots of paint



Margareta Kristensen

WOOD

Hawthorn, Melbourne

Born in Scandinavia, Margareta moved to live in Victoria. From 2003, these very finely turned thimbles are handpainted. The design is all round with naïve painting. Her husband Jorgen made these thimbles



bride



needlecase



Robyn Langford-Brown

PORCELAIN

Sydney

Robyn is a member of the Castle Hill Art Society and the Botanical Art Society of Australia



Gwen Larcombe
PORCELAIN



Maureen Laverty
PORCELAIN
Brisbane

Maureen is a miniature painter. The rim is gold painted at the open edge of the thimble. Maureen also painted Waratahs, gumnuts and gum blossoms



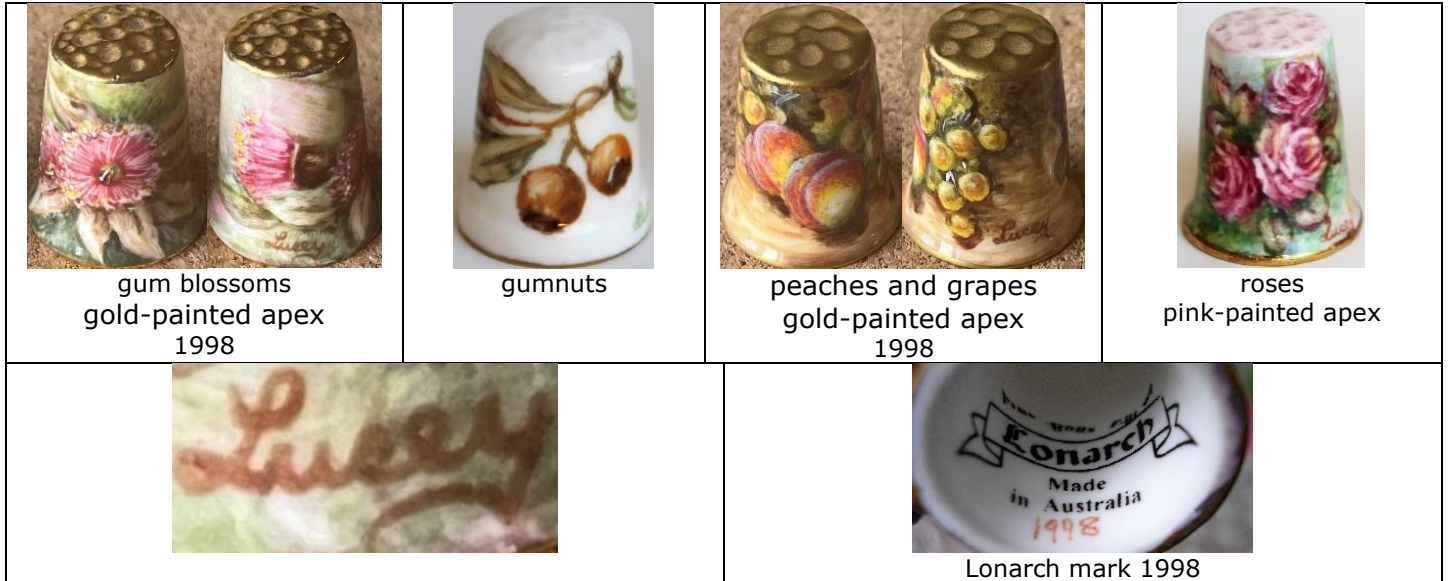
Betty Little
PORCELAIN

signature is painted on the outside



Lorraine Lucey
FINE BONE CHINA
Mt Lonarch, Victoria

Lorraine Lucey of Mt Lonarch Gallery handpaints thimbles made by her studio. Signed on the outside



Pat Lyndon
PORCELAIN
Manly, Sydney

the rim is gold painted at the open edge of the thimble



Deirdre Marlborough
CHINA



H Martin
PORCELAIN

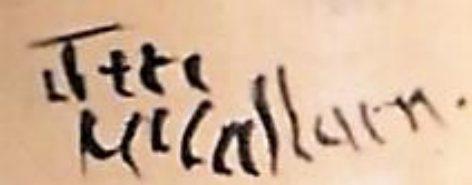


Jen McCallum

POTTERY - WOOD

Strathalbyn, South Australia

this artist makes her own pottery thimbles



Sandra Menger

WOOD

Brisbane

Sandra has been practising pyrography (poker work) for OVER 25 years.

Since 1996, she has used her skills to burn the tiniest floral designs on Brisbane's Col Ward's plain thimbles etc.

Sandra also creates sets of thimbles and mounts them on a cut-out map of Australia





gumnuts
'Hoop Pine'



mini size
L: gumnuts



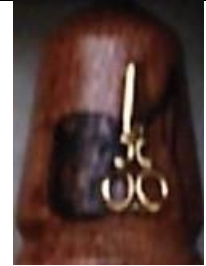
red rose



PRISON ISSUE No, 3246071
with 'convict' stripes



thimble threaded needle gilt
scissors affixed



thimble
gilt scissors affixed



'The Australian Institution usually known as 'The Dunny''



different gum nuts with border of Australian flowers
b&w photo



sewing kit



tape measure



J Mills
WOOD



Geraldton wax



Leschenaultia



Jan Milton
PORCELAIN

Rookwood, Adelaide

This talented miniaturist has captured several typically Australian themes or icons on thimbles. Other than her distinctive style, one can usually recognise Jan Milton's thimbles as the apex is painted gold. Jan's country and rural scenes usually include a gum tree with designs handpainted all around the thimble.



'Bennelong'



gum tree



gum tree



gum tree



gum tree



gum tree



crocodile



'TOMAGO HOUSE'
Barbara Kelly
commissioned this thimble
in 1998



'Parliament House Canberra
Opened May 9th 1927'



'Parliament House Canberra Opened 9th May 1988'



'Cuddlepie' 'Snugglepot' pair
unsigned



'Blinky Bill'
unsigned



grass tree



gum flowers



bush scene



'GINGER MEGGS'
unsigned



'Beryl'
unsigned



'Edwina'
unsigned



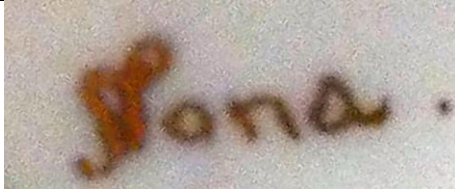
forget-me-nots and violets



Mona
PORCELAIN



blue wren



F Mutking
PORCELAIN



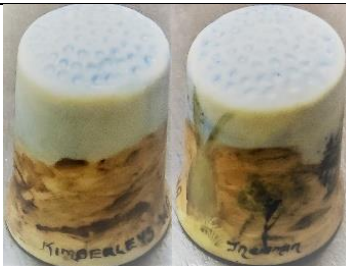
LN
PORCELAIN



gum trees
blue painted apex



J Newman
PORCELAIN
W.A.
blue wash on apex



'KIMBERLEYS W.A.'



grey kangaroo
'KUNUNURRA W.A.'



signed on outside

B Neylon
PORCELAIN



1980



Joan Nock
PORCELAIN

Perth

Joan's rims are gold painted at the open edge of the thimble. Her other themes include Sturt Desert Peas and Blue Wren



'Black Boy Tree'



'Bell Flower'



'Geraldton Wax'



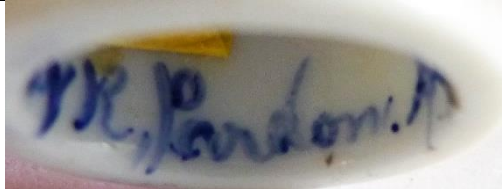
'Leschenaultia'



H Pardon
PORCELAIN
Sydney



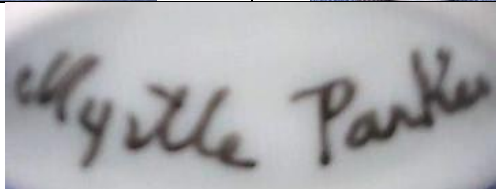
gumnuts
apex is gold painted



Myrtle Parker
PORCELAIN

Sutherland, New South Wales

Parker's apexes are gold-painted. She died in 2020s



C Pearce
PORCELAIN



Frea Peschar

WOOD

Robert Herron commissioned Frea, as an artist, to embellish his thimbles but not many of these sets were produced. The plain wood is a fine backdrop for the Aussie fauna Peschar has intricately 'drawn' in pokerwork or pyrography.

Some are signed



koalas



possum



echidna



echidna - feather-tailed possum - wombat - platypus - sugar glider - wallaby - koala - kangaroo



Perch

PORCELAIN

Western Australia



Geraldton wax



Joy Plos
CHINA
Griffith, NSW

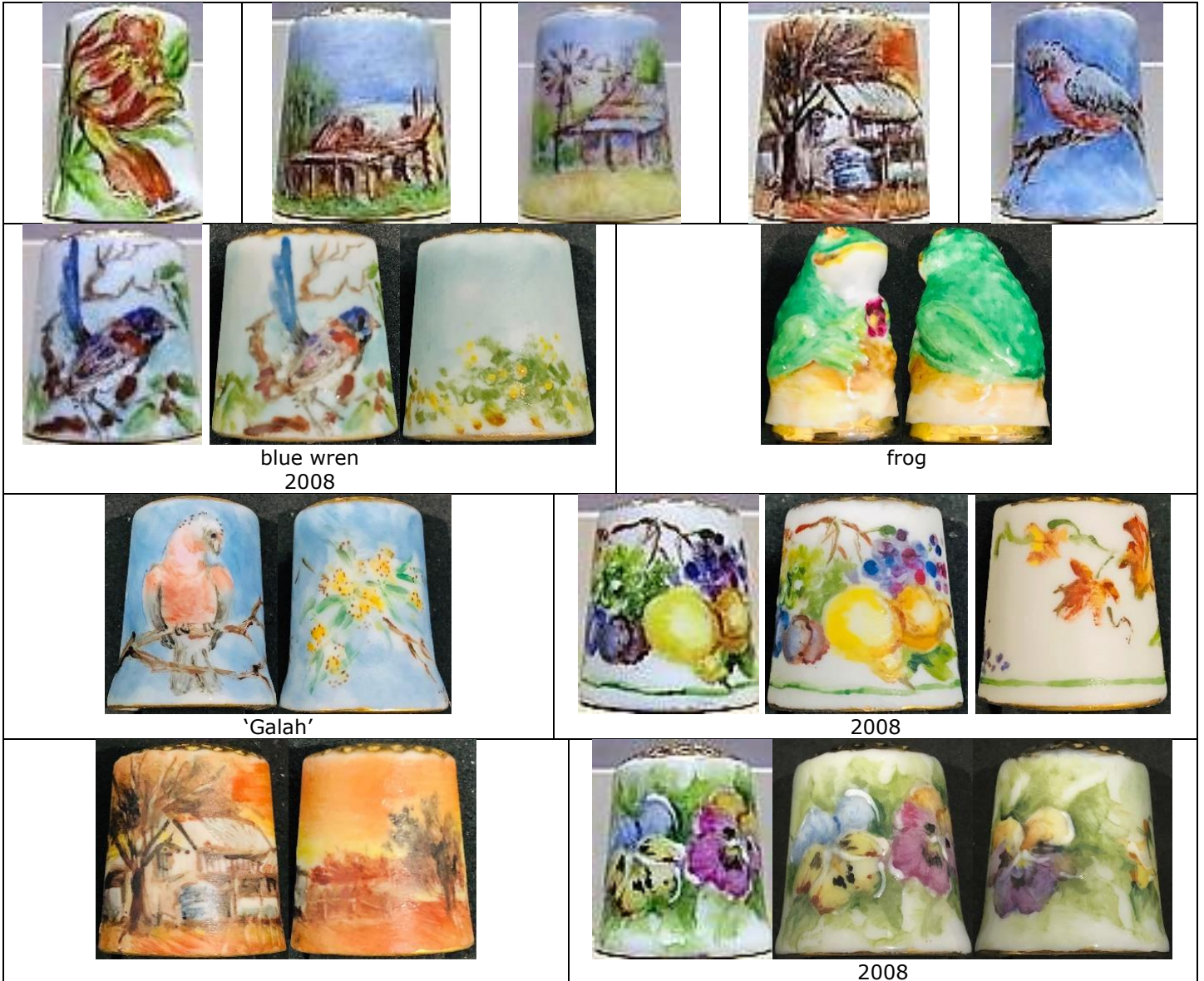


rose



Roma Prentice
CHINA/PORCELAIN
Rostrevor, Adelaide

Roma teaches china painting. The paintings form scenes all round. The rim is gold painted at the open edge of the thimble. Most of her apexes are painted gold. Roma also undertook thimble commissions





2008



'AUTUMN'
commission



'SPRING'
commission



'SUMMER'
commission



'WINTER'
commission



2008
commission



2005



'Joy 40'
1987
commission



Rostrevor is a suburb of Adelaide



Julie Pritchard
PORCELAIN
Western Australia



1984

similar farmhouse painted in black

Julie Patches

H Pursche

PORCELAIN

Barossa, South Australia



1988



1988

M.R.

PORCELAIN



grass tree

M.R.

Lynn Richards

PORCELAIN

Coomera, Queensland

Lynn Richards was born in Hobart, Tasmania, and she moved to New South Wales in 1965 where she commenced porcelain art lessons in 1979. She has had no formal training in art. Unhappy with the limited shapes of porcelain to paint, Richards started making her own porcelain. After producing and selling small quantities of porcelain bisque she began experimenting with making her own moulds, concentrating on small items. She sold these blanks to other porcelain artists. A love of detailed miniatures was emerging, and Lynn turned her hand to thimbles. In 1983 she moved to Queensland. From 1990 onwards she stopped supplying blanks to other artists. Meeting Lynn Richards as Thimbleselect at a Collectables fair in Ipswich in 1994 led to Thimbleselect becoming become a supplier/outlet to the collectables market for Lynn. This stimulated Lynn to extend her range to include matching sewing tools to complement her range of delicate thimble range. The thimbles are embellished with 24 carat gold paint, including some of her apexes, with some of her rims gold painted at the open edge of the thimble



fuchsia
b&w photo





wattle



teddy

teddy with flag
b&w photo

Waratah
b&w photo



ballet shoe pincushion



pincushion



pincushion with pintray



sewing kit with tape measure and thimble



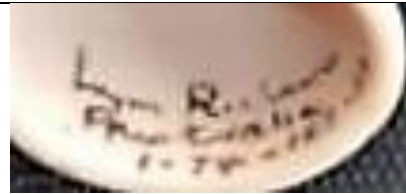
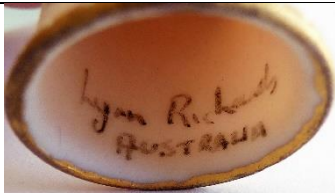
egg thimble holder



egg thimble holder



shoe thimble holder



numbering was a stock number

Geoff Riley

WOOD

Melbourne

1940s-1960s - died 1986



needlecases
'Blue Wren'

Jill Roberts

WOOD

The Deepings Woodturner

Nicholls Rivulet, Tasmania

see also: Fiona Curry



sassafras clown darning-
needlecase
1992



embroiderer darning-
needlecase



darning-needlecase



happy birthday darning-
needlecase



violinist darning-needlecase



Illa Roseworld

PORCELAIN

Cleveland, Brisbane



geraniums
b&w photo

HJS

PORCELAIN



kookaburra with gum blossoms
gold painted apex



Lee Sanders

CHINA
Adelaide

This talented porcelain artist has used Pan Arts as her distributor and they in turn supplied Lee's thimbles to The Thimble Guild in Scotland over many years. Lee battled to acquire good quality porcelain blanks so turned to using Taiwan blanks. Her work is so fine that she is able to replicate her designs along the rim: there is as much detail in those rims as the rest of the thimbles. Lee often has a contrasting subject painted on the reverse. Most of her thimbles have handpainted gold apices. The rim is gold painted at the open edge of the thimble. © lettered in many thimbles. Some have a lustre finish.

Early examples dated 1989 have emerged – handpainted on the smaller porcelain blanks favoured by china painting groups around Australia (the only type available for painting at that time). These were all stock items built up over the years

Lee Sanders died in March 2023





Sturts desert pea
TTG June 2005



Sturts desert pea
2008



Lily of the valley with blossoms
TTG February 2003



Sturts desert pea
2010



1995



cornflowers
2004



nasturtiums
TTG April 2010



2010



'CYMBIDIUM ORCHID'
2010



parrot



poppies & cornflowers
TTG August 2006



2008



2014



daffodils



roses with robin
TTG June 2004



pansies
TTG March 2003



lorikeet
2008



'ROBIN'
2010



blue wren
2000



'OWL'
2010



'ROSELLA'
2010





roses with blue stripes
TTG November 2004 - 2008



2004



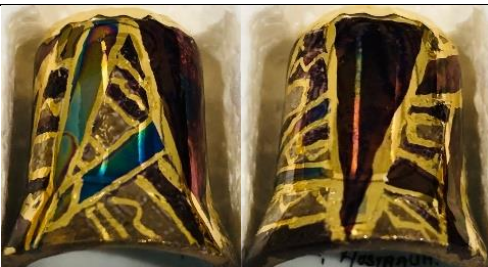
2010



2010



2010



2010



2010



2010



2010



2012



2012



panda



2004



berries
TTG February 2005



2009



butterflies
TTG July 2004





2009



2009



'Kadina SA'
b&w photo



1991



shortened signature



E Saunders

PORCELAIN

Sydney

signature on either the outside or inside



gum blossom



1998



Viv Schipp
PORCELAIN



1990

M P Seaforth
POTTERY



'KA-6'
'Australia II 1983'



Georgia Seitz
WOOD
Brisbane



tating shuttle
'Miss Norma Benporath, OAM 1900-1998'

L R Sherwood
PORCELAIN
Perth



1988
lustre finish



Janet Soo
WOOD



lace bobbin
pyrographed 'I still call Australia home'

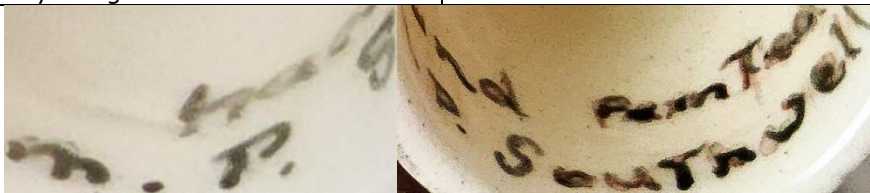
M P Southwell
PORCELAIN



'Sydney Bridge 1932'



'Kookaburra'



Olga Stack

WOOD

Perth

Olga Stack was enterprising enough to place an advertisement for her folk art thimbles in the Kalgoorlie Airport, Western Australia, nearly 600km away. Her floral thimbles are all designed over a painted background and dated



Margaret Towler

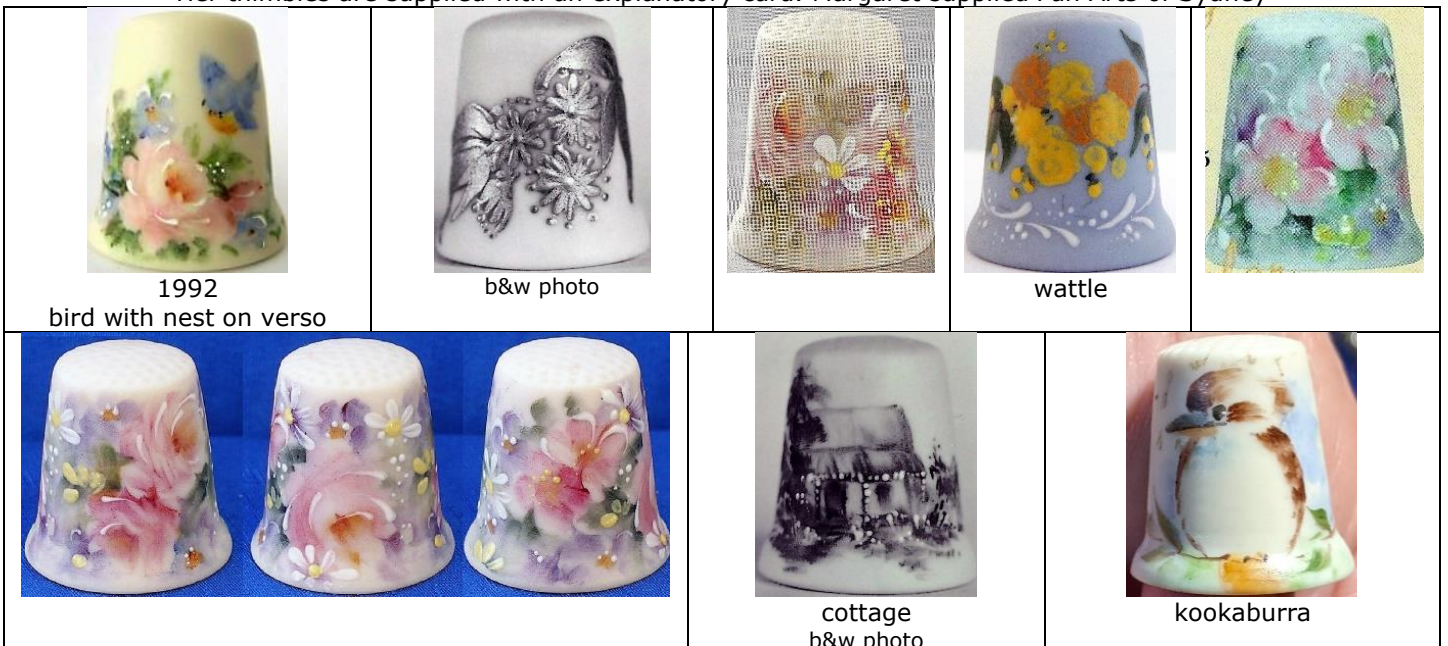
PORCELAIN

Bluff Point, New South Wales

Margaret Towler is a well-known porcelain artist and respected teacher of porcelain art at [Studio Towler Porcelain](#). She is a graduate of the Teaching Institute of Porcelain Art NSW and a member of the Australian Porcelain Decorators Association. Thimbles are a small part of Margaret's handpainted work.

The porcelain bisque thimbles are made by her husband, Bill. The thimbles also have raised or incised decorative designs. She began working on thimbles with handpainted lace in the tradition of Irish Dresden thimbles: I haven't seen an example to date

Her thimbles are supplied with an explanatory card. Margaret supplied *Pan Arts of Sydney*



1992

bird with nest on verso

b&w photo

wattle

cottage
b&w photo

kookaburra



John Trier
CATTLE HORN

Tamrookum, Queensland

John Trier was born in 1932 in England and in 1948 he came to Australia with his family. Having worked with cattle and sheep all his adult life, he started working with cattle horn in 1977. John is a self-taught artist. In 1979 Joyce Nixon-Smith, a Brisbane thimble collector, asked John if he would make thimbles. In 1980 he added scrimshaw of Australian animals. The thimbles had a small sticky label inside. John's trading name is Tamrookum Valley Craft. Unsigned



platypus



hopping mouse



koala



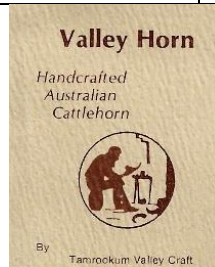
possum



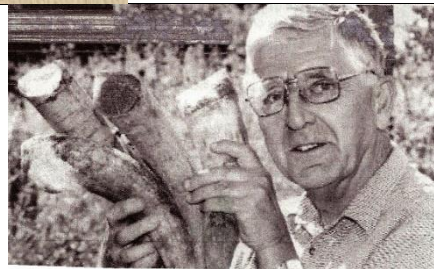
kangaroo
b&w photo



echidna



1985



2008

Sylvia Tupper

PORCELAIN

Rosanna, Melbourne

Sylvia Tupper was commissioned by Beryl Warne of *Thimble Collections* Toorak, Melbourne, to handpaint thimbles with roses and forget-me-nots for the opening of her shop in 1983. Tupper's fine handpainting also reveals her expertise with wildflowers. Her thimbles are supplied on a backing card with her details



Merle Turner

PORCELAIN

Adelaide

Encouraged by her thimble-collector husband, Jack Turner, Merle produced a range of handpainted thimbles – some are commemoratives for the South Australian Digitabulists Society, founded by Jack



Jan Underwood

EARTHENWARE

South Australia



paint yourself earthenware kit thimble

Jillian Varga

PORCELAIN



lustreware



Christian Vocke & Ahmed Ptak (APCV) / Christian Vocke & Graham Pike (CVGP)

EARTHENWARE

South Australia

Christian Vocke is originally from The Netherlands, and he settled in Australia and together with Ahmed Ptak of Auburn, SA made moulded earthenware. In the 1980s Vocke slip cast ceramic thimbles and then handpainted Australian farmyard, Aboriginal and many varied South Australian scenes with low fluid glaze, in a naive style. The background colours are earthy, concentrating on the ochres, greens and browns, with the drawings in black contrast. They have a gloss finish and the inside are ochre-coloured. What a range of shapes and sizes Vocke created: maybe he was also assessing what blanks were available

Vocke was commissioned by Dorothy Andrews to make handpainted souvenir thimbles and these were distributed to various areas in South Australia with the names of the towns on them. Some of their thimbles are marked 'Paris Creek SA'

In 2023 new information has been found by Kissane. Vocke joined with Graham Pike. Their thimble venture has a new signature and the inside is white, not ochre (on examples sighted)



kangaroo on apex



signed CVGP
'ADELAIDE' inside
kangaroo on apex



kangaroo on apex



b&w photo



'MOONTA'
miner



A farm scene showing every aspect of the design



'HMS BUFFALO'



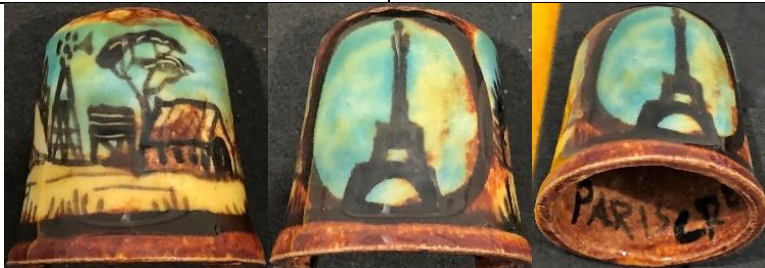
kangaroo



mine headgear
b&w photo



'MT GAMBIER S. AUST.'
signed PTAK



'PARIS CREEK SA'



'PARIS CREEK SA'



'GLENELG S.A'



'KAPUNDA SA'
signed CVGP



'SEVEN HILLS SA'



'GALAH'
signed CVGP
pale blue apex



signed CVGP
blue apex



signed CVGP
pink apex



'STH. AUS GALAH'
signed CVGP



koalas
signed CVGP
pink apex



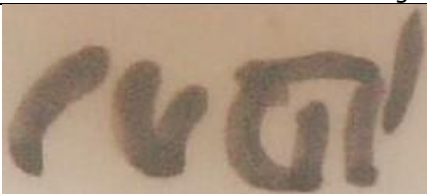
Gouldian finch – cockatoo
signed CVGP
pale blue apex



signed CVGP



APCV on ochre – CVGP on white



ATAK
only appears on one thimble to date



some have AUSTRALIA lettered as well

B.W.
PORCELAIN
Western Australia



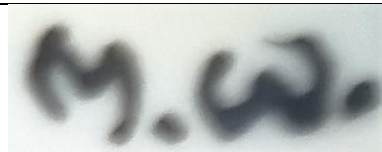
'Blackboy'



M.W.
PORCELAIN



1987



R.W.
PORCELAIN
Victoria



rose
'Barwon Park'
yellow wash on apex



SW
CHINA



Geraldton wax

Beryl Ward (BJW)

WOOD

Brisbane

With her husband Col, a well-known Brisbane woodturner, Beryl turned her hand to handpainting his turned thimbles. Using a folk-art style, these thimbles are delicately painted – in the early 1990s. Her other handpainted thimbles include gum blossoms, mushrooms, gumnuts and flannel flowers



I Watson

PORCELAIN

Sydney



'Koala'



Joanna Wigzell

WOOD

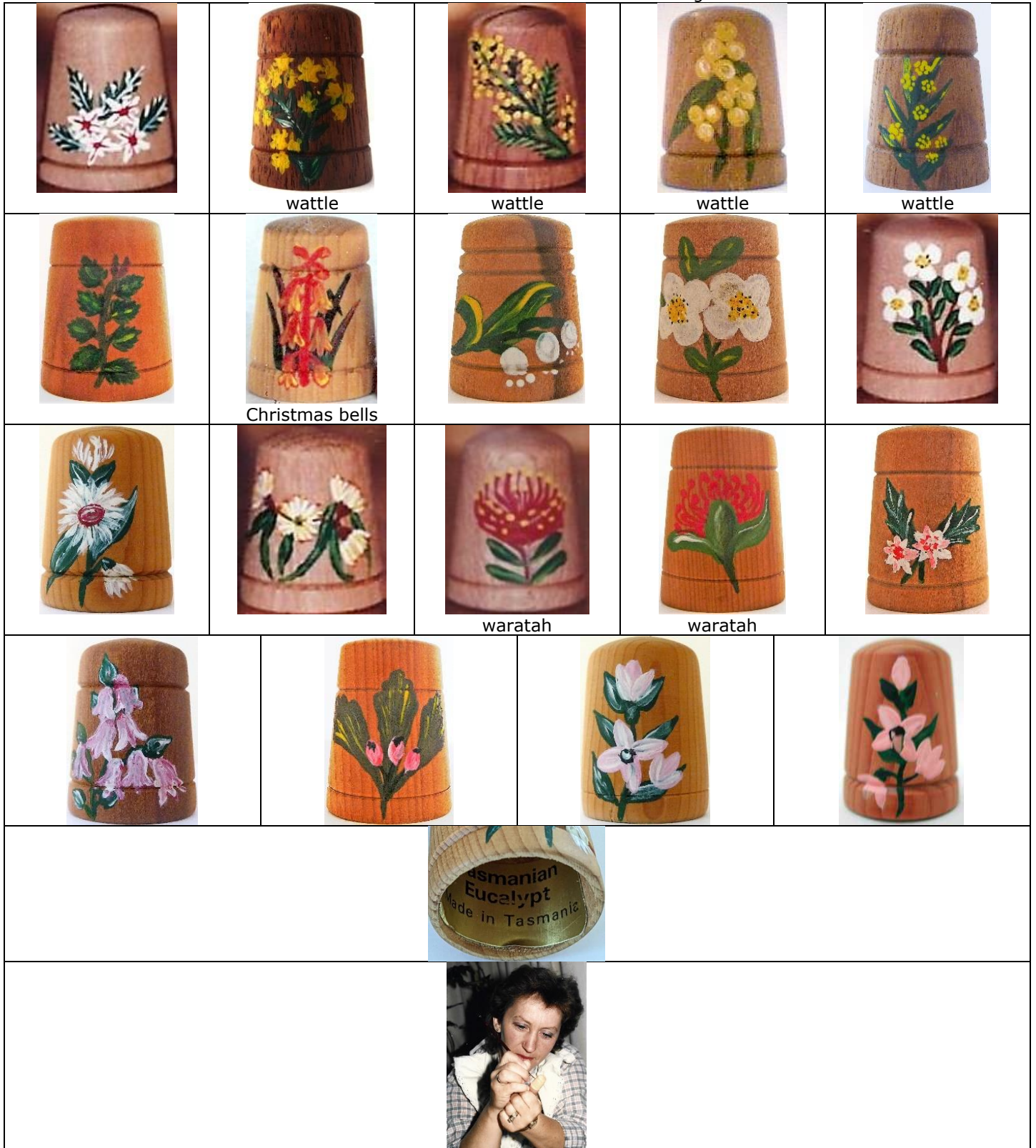
Some of Tasmania's Robert Herron's thimbles were handpainted by his daughter Joanna Wigzell. The handpainted thimbles depict native Australian fauna. Her portrayal of the blue wren is especially popular. Each thimble has the name of the subject in upper case lettering along the outer rim. Some have J Wigzell lettered on Herron's gold sticky labels inside. Occasional thimbles signed

 <p>'SYDNEY AUSTRALIA 2000'</p>	 <p>'SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE SYDNEY AUSTRALIA'</p>	 <p>'BLUE WREN'</p>	 <p>'BLUE WREN'</p>
 <p>'EASTERN ROSELLA'</p>	 <p>'ECHIDNA'</p>	 <p>'KOALA'</p>	 <p>'KOALA'</p>
 <p>'WOMBAT'</p>	 <p>'PLATYPUS AUSTRALIA'</p>	 <p>'CLARENDON HOUSE' (Tasmania)</p>	
 <p>'KOOKABURRA' b&w photo</p>		 <p>'POSSUM' b&w photo</p>	
			

Dianne Williams

WOOD

Robert Herron of Tasmania's thimbles are so finely turned that many artists have embellished them with their own designs. Handpainting was done until 1990 by former Tasmanian, Dianne Williams. Her expertise is painting wildflowers. Robert Herron's gold sticker is sometimes inside - only identifying the wood used. Williams did not letter the name of the flower on the outer rim. Unsigned



Yvonne Winspear (YW)

WOOD

Sydney

Yvonne Winspear created her bark thimbles in 1986. They are of a cork-like substance taken from the Ti-Tree Melaleuca in New South Wales. This paperbark is moulded over wooden thimbles of Tasmanian Leatherwood from a woodturner in West Gosford, NSW. Aboriginal stick people were handpainted by Yvonne. About **600** of these thimbles were handmade. Another thimble design made by Winspear is wooden thimbles with a chamois covering and then handpainted to celebrate the Bicentenary of Australia in 1988. The flat apex is covered in tiny black beads.

120 thimbles of this design were made



Vicky Winters

WOOD

Sydney

Vicky Winters won an art competition when she handpainted a shoe with the traditional painting of her ancestors. She was commissioned by Barbara Kelly and Vicky used Tasmanian Robert Herron's thimbles for her rich Aboriginal designs that are handpainted and completely cover the thimble. These traditional designs feature those handed down from the Dreamtime and incorporate figures and animals in the dot style of painting of her ancestors.

No two thimbles are alike. They are the only thimbles handpainted by an Aboriginal artist. Approximately **30-40** of each of these designs were painted by Winters. Unsigned



V Wyatt

PORCELAIN

Western Australia



'Blackboy'



Handpainted thimbles – unsigned

I am including this batch of unknown Australian painters' thimbles – hoping that your similar thimble is signed – or you recognise the painter. I have added any lettering or my clues that are associated with these thimbles. They may, of course have not been painted in Australia?

					
<p>promoting The Old Umbrella Shop Launceston Tasmania</p>		<p>orchid</p>		<p>wallaby</p>	
					
<p>'BROOME'</p>		<p>'BROOME'</p>		<p>'CHRISTMAS BELLS AUSTRALIA'</p>	
					
<p>Christmas bells b&w photo</p>		<p>Geraldton wax</p>		<p>paint yourself earthenware kit thimble see also: WG</p>	
					
<p>paint yourself earthenware kit thimbles. see also EDK/WG</p>		<p>leschenaultia from Fremantle WA</p>		<p>'Mt Isa'</p>	
	<p>SPIDER ORCHID PEMBERTON W.A.</p>		<p>PERTH W.A.</p>		
<p>'SPIDER ORCHID PEMBERTON W.A.'</p>		<p>'PERTH W.A.'</p>		<p>illegible signature - TAS</p>	



waratah



'AYERS ROCK'
wood



wood



wood



wood



Geraldton wax
wood



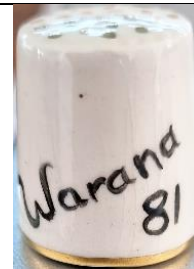
Kangaroo paw



grass tree



koala
indecipherable initials -
wood



'Warana 81'
handpainted gold indentations on apex
this Brisbane festival was first held in 1961. Forerunner of
Brisbane Writers' Festival



rims left unpainted - too accomplished to have left unsigned - possibly M Searle Western Australia



roses - illegible signature



needlecase
'Greetings from Castlemaine'
was this painted by Geoff Riley?

References

- Joy Earles *Thimbles by Jen G TCI Bulletin* winter 2022
Susan Jean Gowan *Thimbles of Australia*. 1998
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2006

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This listing of Australian handpainted 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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