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 – 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: 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

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.
133 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
Strangely many on this list of china painters are the same ones listed in the Appendix 3.

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
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 (and followed the spelling used) – the rest are my own descriptions for collectors who are not familiar with Australian flora and flora.

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:
Australian wooden thimbles and sewing tools
Cornish Enamels thimbles 1995-1997
Francesca character head thimbles
Gerald Delaney handpainted thimbles
Graham Payne handpainted thimbles
Hazrah handpainted bronze thimbles from Mauritius 2006-2009
Iles' handpainted and decaled plastic thimbles
Jacqui and David Parker of Olivia (Birmingham) thimbles 1983-1996
Jasper's of Yorkshire handpainted thimbles
Merryfield Pottery (Devon) thimbles
Modern British hand-decorated wooden thimbles
Modern British handpainted thimbles
Roger Gibbons pewter thimbles 1984-1990
Roger Harrison of Kelso thimbles 1983-1988
Royal Worcester thimble painters
Scottish wooden thimbles

Pat Adam

CHINA/PORCELAIN

Kingston, 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

She also handpainted wooden thimbles



'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'

no photo

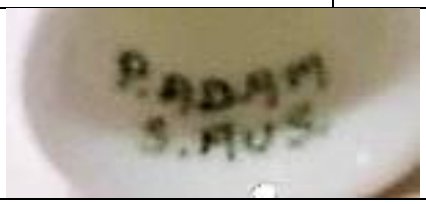
FLOWERING GUM
1987

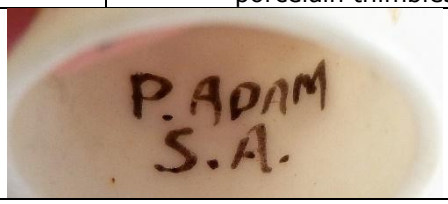
no photo

roses
1987

no photo

KANGAROO PAW
1988
painted on Dorothy Andrews' green porcelain thimbles





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 black 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'
1996

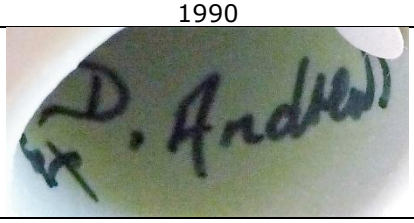
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black with flowers
1989





1990



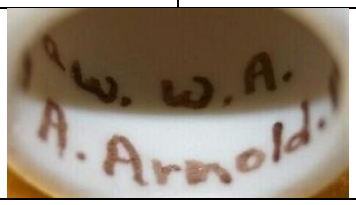
Jo Armstrong
PORCELAIN


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

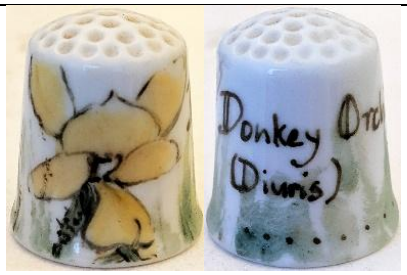
Queensland



Christmas Bells 1982



'Cooktown Orchid (Dendrobium Bigibbum)' 1982



'Donkey Orchid (Diurnis)'



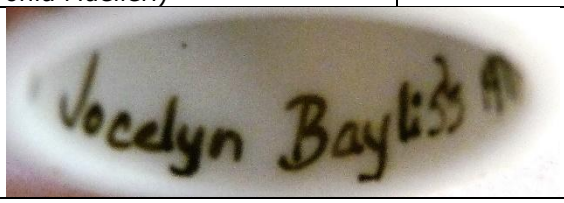
'Pink Boronia' 1979



'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 apexes are painted gold
She also undertook commissions



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



Australian Fauna
wide green band



Australian Flora
green vertical stripes



Australian Fauna
green vertical stripes
L: fauna facing in opposite direction with more ornate gold rim



Australian Flora
no top-coloured band



Australian Flora



Australian Flora



Australian Flora
vertical blue stripes



Australian Flora
smaller flowers
early unsigned
unpainted apex



Basket



Black Rose



Blue Diamond



Blue Wren



Bow



Cobalt Posy



Forget-me-nots



Furstenberg



Green Rose



Musical



initial 'B'
commission



initial ‘M’
commission



Pansie Blue Stripe



Pansy



Pansy
early unsigned



Pink Rose



Rose Gold



Sturt’s Desert Pea



Pansie Blue Stripe button



Bow button



Forget-me-not button



button



Pansy button



Pansie Blue Stripe
needleholder



Pansie Blue Stripe thimble
holder



Blue Diamond needlecase



Forget-Me-Not thimble holder





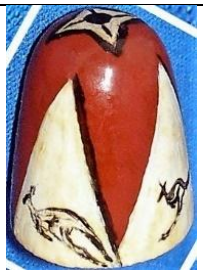
Jamie Bell (JB)
WHALE TOOTH IVORY
Albany WA



'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



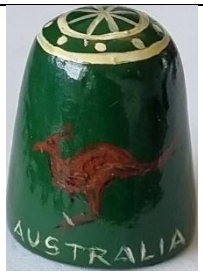
echidna - goanna



emus with leaves
'26.8.80'



goanna



kangaroo
'AUSTRALIA'



kangaroo
'1985
AUSTRALIA'
opal in apex





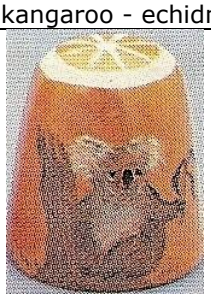
kangaroo - echidna



kangaroo - koala



koalas
'AUSTRALIA'



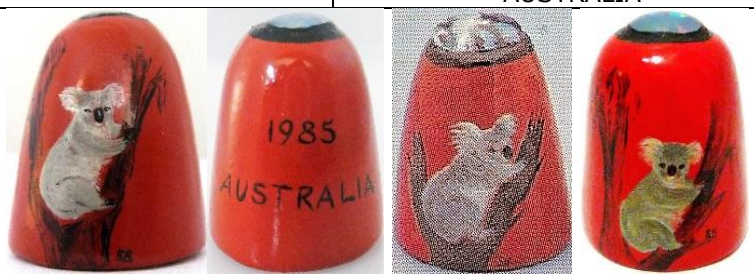
koala



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'

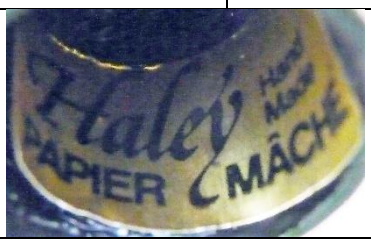








yacht





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

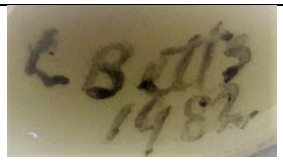

koala


owl


on flower


flower



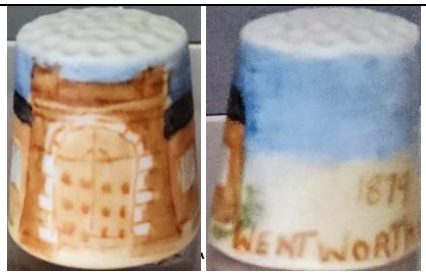


L; used more frequently 1982-1984

Blaskett
CHINA


kookaburra



T Bloomfield
PORCELAIN


'1879 WENTWORTH GAOL'



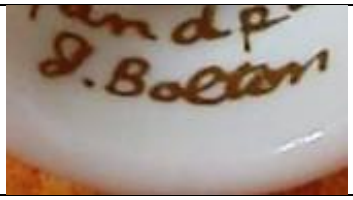
Jean Bolton

PORCELAIN

her apexes are handpainted gold



'Japanese GARDEN COWRA Australia'



Marjorie Brook (MB)

PORCELAIN

South Australia

Marjorie matched her rims and apexes in matching colours



'Port Elliot'



'Port Elliot'
1986



'Port Elliot'
1988



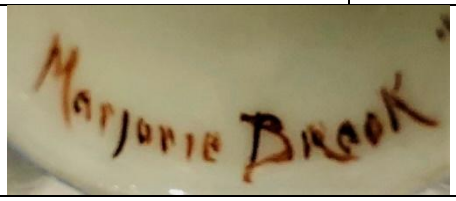
'Victor Harbour'



'Victor Harbour'



seagulls





Jane
PORCELAIN
Western Australia
her apexes are handpainted gold





Pat Brown (P Brown)
CHINA/PORCELAIN
Adelaide
Pat was a thimble collector. Some of her apexes are painted gold
1980s



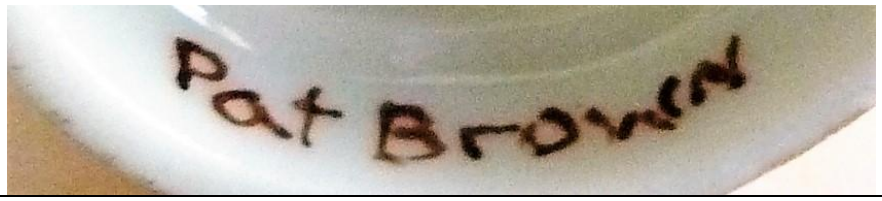




Geraldton wax







Helen 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


mushrooms

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'

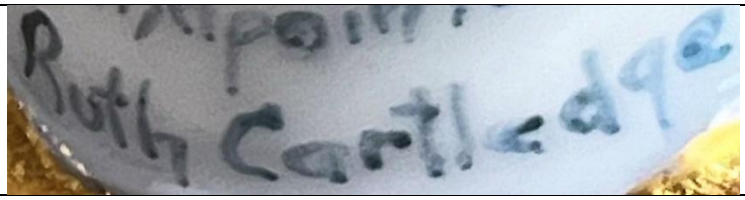



'Forget me nots'
October 1994



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

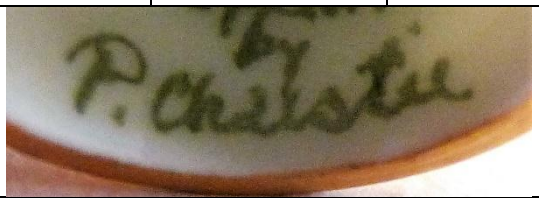

'Sunflower Queensland'


'Poinsettia Queensland'


'Viola Hederacea'


'Koala Australia'


'Vanilla Lily'



P Coldbeck
PORCELAIN
this artist uses gold paint for the indentations on apex


lechenaultia


bottlebrush

Mary Covill
PORCELAIN


gum blossom
1988



A Craigie
PORCELAIN


gold painted apex



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

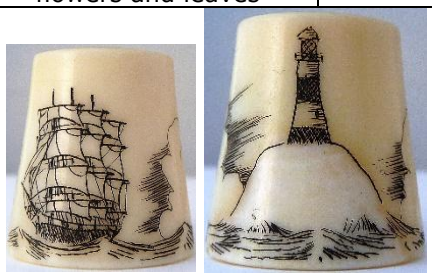
James is renowned for his scrimshaw. He acquired a great quantity of Sperm Whale teeth before the sale of whale ivory was banned in 1972. This miniaturist, from the Royal School of Fine Arts, has created exquisite scrimshaw thimbles. The scenes are carved with a probe or sharpened nail, and then black 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.

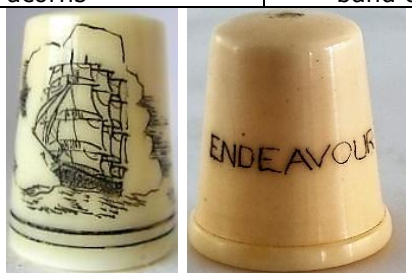

flowers and leaves


acorns


band of flowers


sailing ship


sailing ship and lighthouse



sailing ship
'Endeavour'


band of flowers and leaves


lighthouse


posy of flowers and leaves


koala

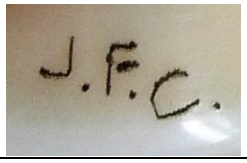

flowers

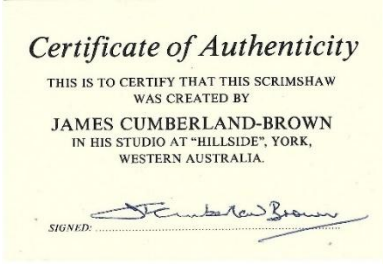


flowers



posy of flowers and leaves









JCB York W.A. 1991

Cynthia
PORCELAIN
Toowoomba, Queensland

no photo	no photo	no photo	
'Barn owl'	'Blue wren'	'Eastern spinebill'	'Stilt'

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


blue wren
RD


blue wren
RD


blue wren


blue wren
RD


blue wren
RD


yellow pansy
RD


pink pansy
RD


white pansy


wattle
RD


red robin


yellow eye
RD


kookaburra
RD


kookaburra
RD



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

Dantė

PORCELAIN

gold painted apex



'Australian wattle'

no photo

Forget-me-nots



violet



Val de Vries

CHINA – METAL

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



Agate

TTG June 2004



agate - bloodstone

TTG December 2004



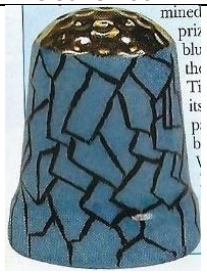
agate – lazulite

TTG September 2004



agate – rhodonite

TTG August 2004



agate – spider web turquoise

TTG November 2004



amaryllis

TTG August 2005



apples

TTG June 2002



Art deco

TTG October 2010



'Be my Valentine'



Blue Delft

TTG August 2006



Christmas 2001



Christmas 2002



'Christmas 2003'



Christmas 2005



Christmas 2006 Snowman
TTG December 2006



Christmas 2006 Church
TTG December 2006



Christmas



Cornelli work
TTG June 2003



Delft



daisies
TTG June 2006



Easter



Easter



Edward and Edwina Bear
TTG August 2001



floral basket
TTG January2002



forget-me-nots
TTG August 2001



forget-me-nots
2003



forget-me-nots
2008



forget-me-nots
metal



fuchsia
TTG July 2005



gladiolus
TTG September 2005



grapes
TTG July 2002



'Happy New Year 2004'



hibiscus



'Joyce 80 16-2-1922'
2002
Commission
TTG January 2006



koala
TTG June 2001



lattice
2002



'Linda Yahoo Thimble Club'



'Merry Christmas'
2001



'Mother'
2004


nasturtium
TTG October 2005



New Year
'2002' - '2002 Karl'


pansies


pansies


pansies


pansies


patchwork quilt designs – set of 12
2002-2003



Patchwork quilt
Dutchman puzzle
2002



Patchwork quilt
Friendship knot
2002



Patchwork quilt
Irish chain
2002



Patchwork quilt
Sawtooth patch
2002



Patchwork quilt
Sunshine & shadow
2002


peaches
TTG August 2002


pears
TTG February 2002

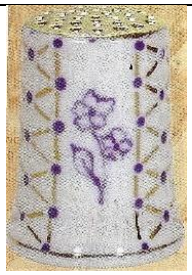

pimpernel
TTG February 2004


poppies
2006


poppies


Poppy
TTG November 2005

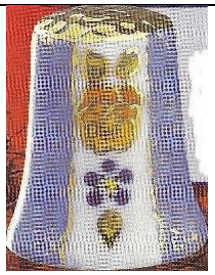

remembrance poppies
2003



rose



roses



roses



Scottie dogs
2000



Serenade for St Patrick
TTG February 2004



snowman
2003



trellis
TTG March 2004



tulip



Uluru
2003



Valentine
TTG February 2004



violets



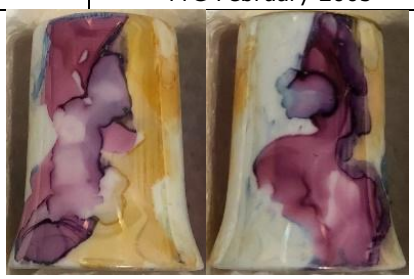
violets and robbons
TTG February 2005



Whistle while you work



2001



2003











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 apexes 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











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



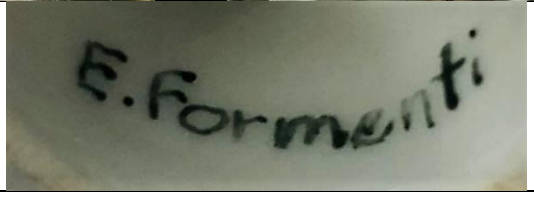
flannel flower - wattle



E Formenti
PORCELAIN





WG

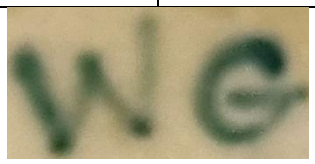
EARTHENWARE

see also: EDK

paint yourself earthenware kit thimbles







signed in apex with 01 for 2001

Mabs Gallagher

PORCELAIN

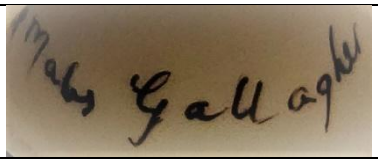
Canberra



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

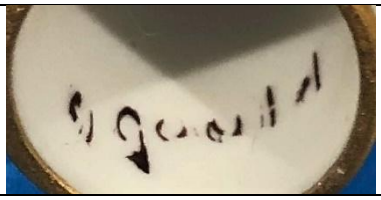


Georgina Gould

PORCELAIN



bottlebrush



Jen Greeneklee (Jen G)

CERAMICS

South Australia

Jen creates her own thimbles and handpaints them



cottage



Gum blossom
'Australia'



owl



ladybirds – two versions



Kloe the koala



blue daisies



Pengo



Yellow daisies



\Pinklet







J Gregory
PORCELAIN



crocodile
1987

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

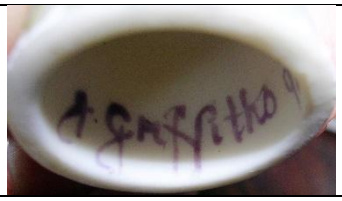




1992








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



C Harris
PORCELAIN





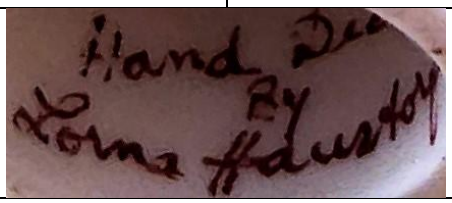
Lorna Haustorfer
PORCELAIN



1981



rosella
1998

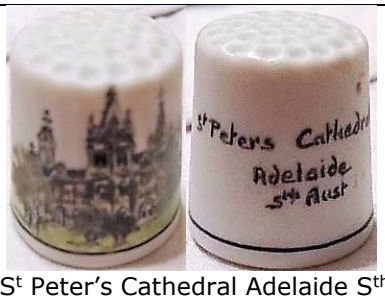


B Haysman
PORCELAIN
South Australia



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


'Burra'



'St Peter's Cathedral Adelaide Sth Aust'

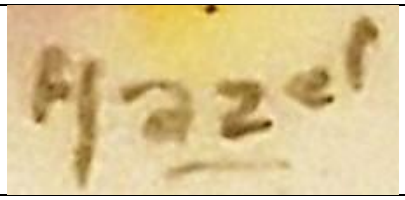


Hazel
PORCELAIN






thick gold rim



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




'Blue Gum Tasmania'




'Cooktown Orchid'
R: 'Queensland'



'Sturt Pea'




'Kangaroo Paw WA'



'Desert Rose'




'Christmas Bell'





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

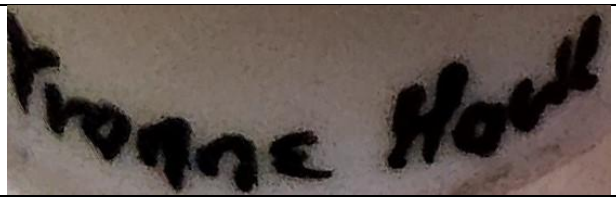


'White winged fairy wren Australia'
1987
unsigned


initials slope slightly backwards

Yvonne Howe
PORCELAIN


koala
1986



Pam Howson
PORCELAIN

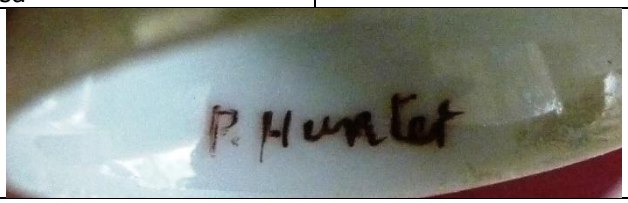

'Cartmill'

P Hunter
CHINA
Tanunda, South Australia



'*Tanunda*'
'96 Barossa





Impress Ceramics

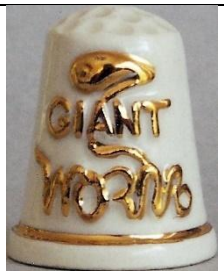
CERAMIC

Cowes, Phillip Island, Victoria

The Townsend family migrated from Wales to Phillip Island in 1987.

The painter is not named. Thimbles are handpainted in 22ct gold into the figures in relief. Their thimble boxes were marked 'Australia's Golden Heritage Collection'.

They closed in 1988.



'Giant worm'


Penguin


Lyrebird





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





Robyn Langford-Brown

PORCELAIN

Sydney

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



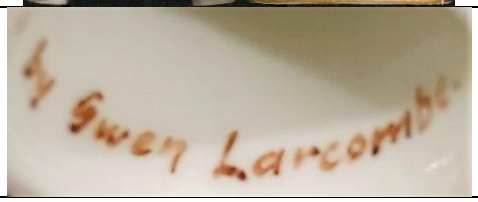




Gwen Larcombe

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



'BANKSIA'



'WATTLE'





1995

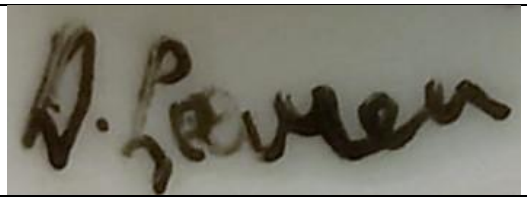
D Levren

PORCELAIN

Sydney



'BOTTLE BRUSH BICENTENNIAL 1988'



Betty Little

PORCELAIN

signature is painted on the outside



gold-painted apex

Lorraine Lucey

FINE BONE CHINA

Mt Lonarch, Victoria

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



gum blossoms
gold-painted apex
1998



gumnuts



peaches and grapes
gold-painted apex
1998



roses
pink-painted apex





Lonarch mark 1998

Pat Lyndon
PORCELAIN
Manly, Sydney
the rim is gold painted at the open edge of the thimble


waratahs



Deirdre Marlborough
CHINA


'I love a sunburnt country …'
1986
gold painted apex



H Martin
PORCELAIN


bottlebrush


Sturt's desert pea


waratah


wattle



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'



'Beryl'
unsigned



'Blinky Bill'
unsigned



bush scene



bush scene



bush scene



bush scene



bush scene



bush scene



bush scene



bush scene



crocodile



'Cuddlepie' 'Snugglepot' pair
unsigned



'Edwina'
unsigned



'GINGER MEGGS'
unsigned



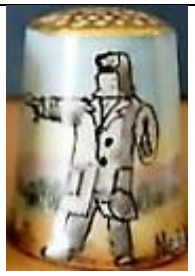
forget-me-nots and violets



grass tree



gum flowers



'Ned Kelly'



'Parliament House Canberra Opened May 9th 1927'

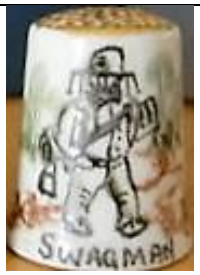


'Parliament House Canberra Opened 9th May 1988'

Learn more about Australian handpainted thimbles and sewing tools







'SWAGMAN'



'TOMAGO HOUSE'
Barbara Kelly commissioned this thimble in 1998





Mona
PORCELAIN


blue wren



F Mutking
PORCELAIN



L.N.

PORCELAIN



gum trees
blue painted apex



J Newman

PORCELAIN
W.A.
blue wash on apex



'KIMBERLEYS W.A'



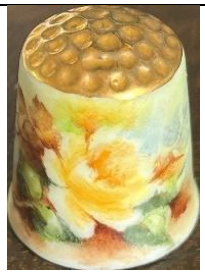
grey kangaroo
'KUNUNURRA W.A'



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'

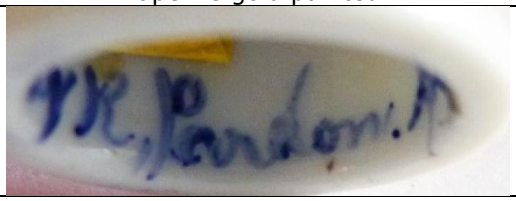

'Leschenaultia'





H Pardon
PORCELAIN
Sydney


gumnuts
apex is gold painted



Myrtle Parker

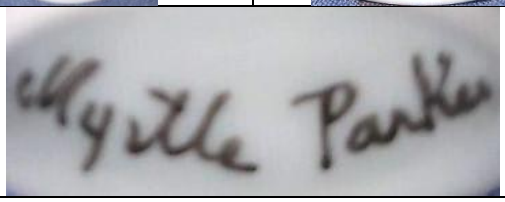
PORCELAIN

Sutherland, New South Wales

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







C Pearce

PORCELAIN





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








blue wren
2008


frog


'Galah'


2008




2008







2008



'AUTUMN'
commission



'SPRING'
commission



'SUMMER'
commission



'WINTER'
commission



2008
commission



2005



'Joy 40'
1987
commission

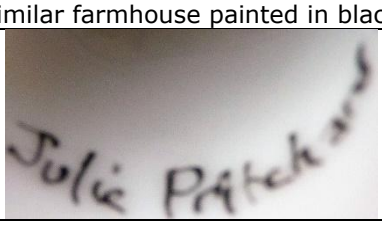


Rostrevor is a suburb of Adelaide



Julie Pritchard
PORCELAIN
Western Australia


1984
similar farmhouse painted in black



H Pursche
PORCELAIN
Barossa, South Australia


1988


1988

M.R.
PORCELAIN


grass tree



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 the 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



pine cones
1991



ballet shoe pincushion



pincushion



pincushion with pintray



sewing kit with tape measure and thimble



egg thimble holder



egg thimble holder



egg thimble holder



shoe thimble holder





numbering was a stock number

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 can 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 apexes. 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



berries
TTG February 2005



blue wren
2000



butterflies
TTG July 2004



Christmas bells



cornflowers
2004



'CYMBIDIUM ORCHID'
2010



daffodils



fish
2004



fuchsia
2003



'Hibiscus'
2014

Learn more about Australian handpainted thimbles and sewing tools



homestead



homestead



homestead
2003



homestead
2012



homestead



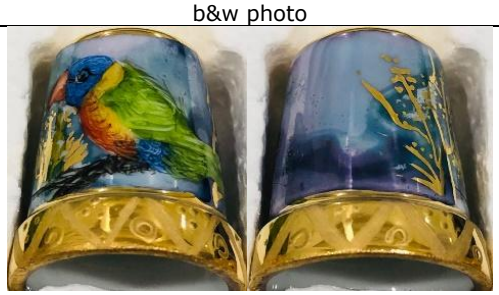
'HONEY'
2011



'Kadina SA'
roses
b&w photo



Lily of the valley with blossoms
TTG February 2003



lorikeet
2008



nasturtiums



orchid
2010
TTG April 2010



orchid
2011



orchid
2011



orchid
2008



orchid
2014



'OWL'
2010



owl



panda



parrot



pansies
TTG March 2003



poppies & cornflowers
TTG August 2006



'ROBIN'
2010



roses



roses
1989



roses



roses



roses



2004



roses



roses
1989



roses with robin
TTG June 2004



roses with blue stripes
TTG November 2004 - 2008



'ROSELLA'
2010



Sturts desert pea
2010



Sturts desert pea
TTG June 2005



Sturts desert pea
2008



thatched cottage
2010



thatched cottage
2010



thatched cottage
2010



violets
2003



violets
2014



1989



1989



1991



1995



2009



2009



2009



2010



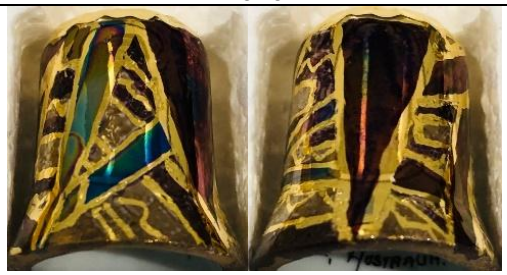
2010



2010



2010



2010



2012







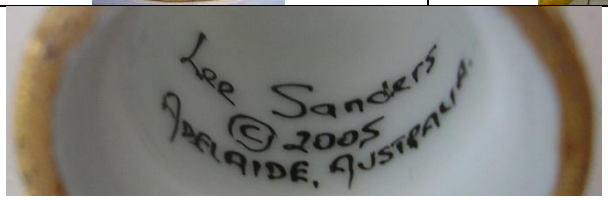














shortened signature

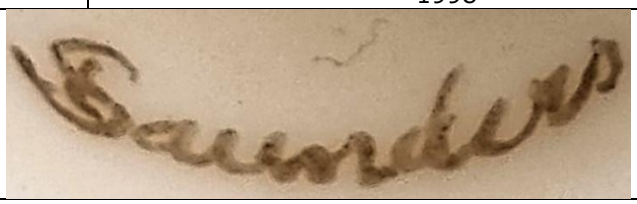


E Saunders
PORCELAIN
Sydney
signature on either the outside or inside


gum blossom


1998





Viv Schipp
PORCELAIN


1990

M P Seaforth
POTTERY


'KA-6'
'Australia II 1983'



L R Sherwood

PORCELAIN

Perth



1988

lustre finish



M P Southwell

PORCELAIN



'Sydney Bridge 1932'



'Kookaburra'



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



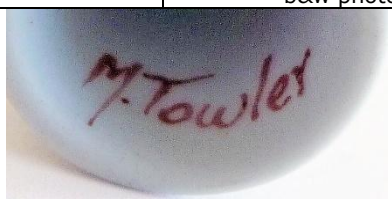




cottage
b&w photo



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

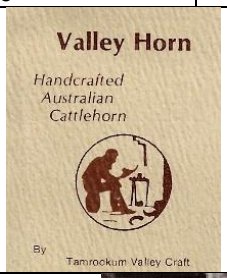


kangaroo



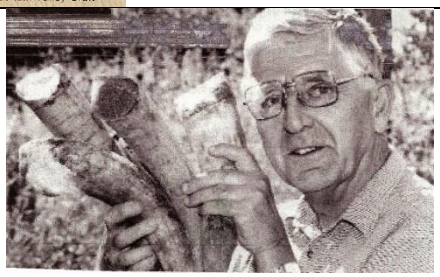
echidna







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



bottlebrush



'Bottlebrush'



Merle Turner

PORCELAIN

Adelaide

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

Merle often used matching colour trims to complement her flower studies – and following a Royal Worcester thimble tradition, she painted sprigs on the verso, where appropriate

Merle died in 2018



'Aust Blue Wren'
'Australia' lettered alongside signature



'B.G.C'
(Brisbane Golf Club)



'Bottlebrush'
'1836-1986' stamp within map outline of South Australia alongside signature



'Coral Vine'
'Australia' lettered alongside signature



'Gum Blossom'



'Kangaroo Paw'




'Kookaburra'


'Magpie'

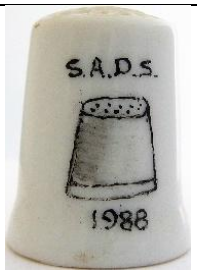


'Pelican'


'Pine cones'




'Pink heath'
'1836-1986' stamp within map outline of South Australia alongside signature

'S.A.D.S. 1988'






'Sturts Desert Pea'



'Waratah'

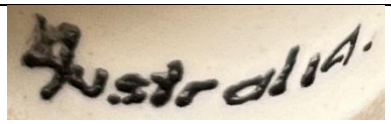


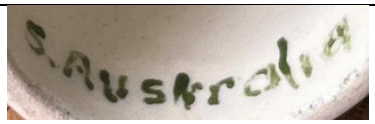
'Xmas 1990'
'S.Australia' lettered alongside signature





additional mark '1836-1986' with outline map of South Australia







1992

Jan Underwood
EARTHENWARE
South Australia

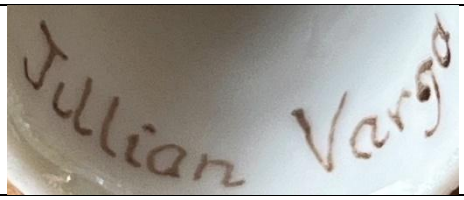


paint yourself earthenware kit thimble

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 insides 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 was discovered by Kissane. Vocke joined with **Graham Pike**. Their thimble venture has a new signature and the inside is white, not ochre (on examples sighted)

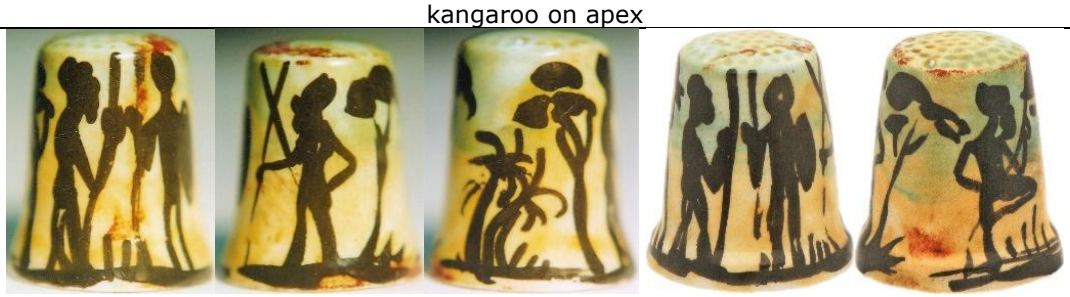
Thimbles with a named place are included at the end



Aboriginal scene
kangaroo on apex



Aboriginal scene
signed CVGP
'ADELAIDE' inside
kangaroo on apex



Aboriginal scene



Aboriginal scene



Aboriginal scene
kangaroo on apex



caravan



farm scene



farm scene



farm scene



farm scene



farm scene



farm scene



farm scene



farm scene showing every aspect of the design



farm scene



arm scene
signed CVAP



farm scene
signed CVGP



'GALAH'
signed CVGP
pale blue apex



kangaroo



mine headgear
b&w photo



Gouldian finch – cockatoo
signed CVGP
pale blue apex



koalas
signed CVGP
pink apex



koalas
signed CVGP
pink apex



parrot



swan
signed CVGP

no photo

THE BLUE LAKE



'GLENELG S.A'



'HMS BUFFALO'



'HUGHES PUMP HOUSE MOONTA'
R: signed CVGP



'KAPUNDA SA'
signed CVGP



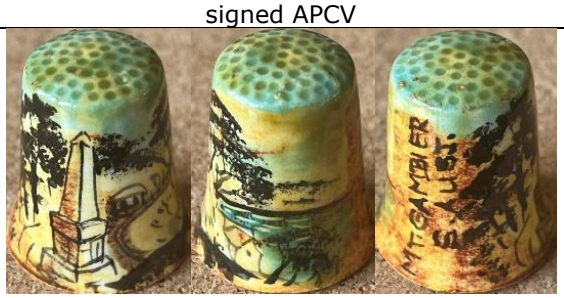
KINGSTON. S.E. S. AUST.
signed CVGP



MILAND DUNNY RACES
signed APCV



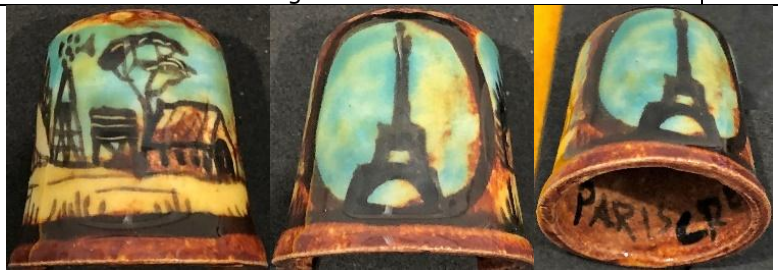
'MOONTA'
miner



'MT GAMBIER S. AUST.'
signed PTAK



'PARIS CREEK SA'



'PARIS CREEK SA'

no photo

SAILING AT MILANG

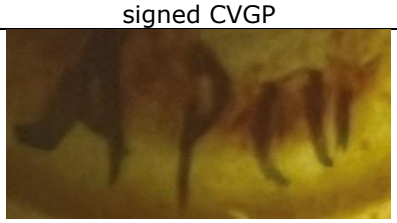


'SEVEN HILLS SA'


'STH. AUS GALAH'
signed CVGP



APCV on ochre – CVGP on white


TPAK
only appears on one thimble to date


some have AUSTRALIA lettered as well

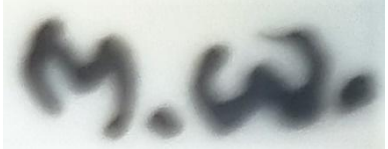
B.W.
PORCELAIN
Western Australia


'Blackboy'



M.W.
PORCELAIN


1987



R.W.
PORCELAIN
Victoria



rose
'Barwon Park'
yellow wash on apex



SW
CHINA



Geraldton wax

Watson
PORCELAIN
Sydney



'Koala'



J Whyborn
PORCELAIN
Busselton WA


grass trees



Jade Woods
PORCELAIN


leaves
2000

V Wyatt
PORCELAIN
Western Australia


'Blackboy'



Handpainted thimbles and sewing tools – 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.



'BROOME'



'BROOME'



'CHRISTMAS BELLS AUSTRALIA'


Christmas bells


Christmas bells
b&w photo


Geraldton wax


grass tree


Kangaroo paw


kookaburra


lechenaultia
'York WA'
blue painted apex


lechenaultia
blue painted apex


'Mt Isa'


lechenaultia
from Fremantle WA


The Old Umbrella Shop Launceston Tasmania


orchid



'PERTH W.A.'



'SPIDER ORCHID PEMBERTON W.A.'



waratah



wallaby



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



paint yourself earthenware kit thimble



paint yourself earthenware kit thimbles. see also EDK/WG



paint yourself earthenware kit thimble
see also: WG







illegible signature - TAS





roses – illegible signature
possibly Beneslic or Bensslic



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



lechenaultia
Perth WA

References

Joy Earles *Thimbles by Jen G* TCI Bulletin winter 2022
Susan Jean Gowan *Thimbles of Australia.* 1998
Nicola Kissane *Thimble maker – Christian Vocke* TCI Bulletin winter 2023
Norma Shattock *Australia's Lee Sanders handpainted thimbles. Needlework Tool Collectors Society of Australia Newsletter* May 2006
Norma Shattock *Australia's Kyneton handpainted china*. Needlework Tool Collectors Society of Australia Newsletter Oct 2006

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Jack Turner | Jenny White | Sue Wilson | Keith Wiskin | Krystyna Zagajewska

This listing of Australian handpainted 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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October 2021