

Sydney Opera House thimbles

When you think of Sydney in terms of its landmarks, does the Sydney Opera House spring to mind? With its iconic shape, designed by the Danish architect Jørn Utzon, it has become the most recognised Australian "building".

From 24th March 2014 the Sydney Opera House shape will be a registered trademark. This has been taken out by the Opera House Trust and its shape will be trademarked - its logo and image are already trademarks. It will be the first building fully trademarked in Australia. It will no longer be appropriate to use the image for commercial purposes or part of a brand. According to an article in *The Australian* on 25 January 2014, it's "souvenir shops beware". The only outlet for souvenirs featuring the Sydney Opera House will be merchandise made for the Opera House Trust.

How does this affect thimble collectors? There were thimbles with the image of the Sydney Opera House produced during the 1980s, which was the decade when the most collectable thimbles appeared in Australia. It may be the sort of thematic thimble collection that could appeal and there would now be a finite number to look for. Who would now produce thimbles using a trademarked image?

Having produced the book *Thimbles of Australia* in 1998 I am familiar with these SOH image thimbles and I thought it worthwhile reproducing them here. There may be dozens more but these would only be of the type on Taiwanese blanks (none seen to date) or firehydrants of which I have only included a few, more as an example of the type.

Of the under thirty examples of SOH thimbles, only two were commissioned for the Sydney Opera House shop. You may notice that these thimbles also feature the other Sydney icon: the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Some were produced after the publication of *Thimbles of Australia*.

I have grouped the thimbles in the order that they appear in my book (ie by what they are made of). As I don't own all of these thimbles, if you have better or clearer photos, please share.



Sydney Opera House – *Songlines 2016* | Sailing into Sydney Harbour at dawn March 2020

As a librarian who is passionate about reading, I'd love to share these titles that relate to this topic
Kristina Olsson *The shell*

[For other Australian thimble topics see](#)

Australian advertising thimbles

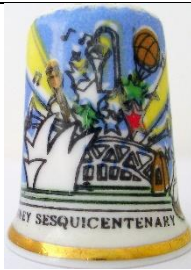
Australian modern sterling silver thimble and sewing tools makers 1973-2014

Australian modern sterling silver thimble and sewing tool makers 1950-2019

Australia's Elfin thimbles



Zygmunt Libucha
Brisbane
sterling silver
1980s



Birchcroft
fine bone china
Pan Arts of Sydney commissioned these
thimbles for Sydney's Sesquicentenary
(1847-1992)
late 1990s
part of Pan Arts Collectables Australia
Series No. 28
1992



Birchcroft
fine bone china



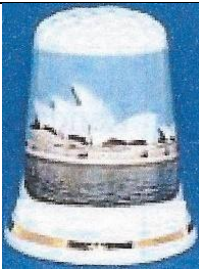
Birchcroft
fine bone china
'Sydney' travel poster



Caverswall
England
china
from Capital cities of Australia set
features NSW's waratah on the verso
1980s



Connoisseur Sterling Classic
china
Worcester
handpainted pewter on fine bone
china
limited to **5000** pieces
designed by Neil Davis



Cottage Thimbles
fine bone china
part of their 'Landmarks' series



Pan Arts Collectables
bone china
Australia Series No. 35
produced when Sydney won Olympics,
using the Olympic colours
1990s



Pan Arts Collectables
bone china
Australia Series No. 20
1980s



Pan Arts Collectables
bone china
Australia Series No. 40-41 (not lettered
on thimbles)
pair of similar thimbles
Left: Australia celebrates the Millennium
right: Sydney celebrates 2000
2000



Pan Arts Collectables
bone china
Special Series No. 1 (not lettered on
thimbles)
commissioned by the Opera House shop
mid 1980s



Pan Arts Collectables
bone china
Australia Series No. 6
mid 1980s



Sutherland China

England
china

To commemorate the Australian Bicentenary and the Visit of the Prince & Princess of Wales
commissioned by Scotland Direct/The Thimble Guild
1988



Thimble Collectors Society

Uttoxeter England
china

The prestigious Olympic Games for the year 2000 is awarded to Sydney, Australia Sept., 1993



Wedgwood

England
jasperware
2000s



England
china



unmarked china
Sydney Opera House
40th anniversary (2013)



unmarked china



unmarked china



Taiwanese blank



Taiwanese blank



metal badge on china
The new millennium 2000
limited edition of **2000**



Crummles Enamels

England
enamel and brass
commissioned by the Opera House shop
1980s?



various firehydrants



cloisonné (enamel and brass)
Chinese
2000s



Exquisite Creations
England
pewter
the lettering is on the body of the thimbles
1980s



Stephen Frost of Warwick Models
England
pewter
1980s



Pan Arts Pewter
Sydney
pewter
1989-1990s



Riccardo's Pewter
Sydney
pewter
some examples show cross-hatching to show the roof tiles
1980s



Robert Herron
Tasmania
handpainted blackwood
Joanna Wigzell
2000



Wales Association of Pewter Works (WAPW)
handpainted and plain pewter
the lettering is under the icon



Robert Herron
Tasmania
handpainted Joanna
Wigzell
sold thru Gimbels in Maine
USA
2001



Keith Adams & Peter Grossman
Port Macquarie and
Sydney
commissioned by Pan Arts,
Sydney
handpainted wooden top hats
three-dimensional silver with
opal atop
1980s?



Indonesian
handpainted in dot-painting
2000s



Malcolm Walter
South Australia
sharing the design with Sydney
Harbour Bridge
Ullmann glass with sterling silver
1990s



metal

References

Susan Jean Gowan *Thimbles of Australia*. 1998

Contributors

Pawel Brzyski | Caroline Fisher | Ros Forster | Denise Jenkins-Welsh Thimble Society | Nicola Kissane
Dagmar Nemeth

This listing of Sydney Opera House 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.

EMAIL thimbleselect@bigpond.com TO SHARE YOUR KNOWLEDGE

**© Sue Gowan
January 2014**