

# Australian wooden thimbles and sewing tools

This topic includes and updates Chapter 5 of Thimbles of Australia. It completes my Australian topics.

Woodturning is the ideal hobby for retirees. Some men's sheds have lathes for woodturning for their members. Another avenue to further this hobby is joining the local woodturners' group. I have noticed some turners use wood fruit trees, where garden prunings made a cheap source of wood.

What I have noticed over the years is the total lack of woodturners' marks and the wood is rarely named. The occasional turner will supply a certificate with these details – once the thimble is separated from the thimble, the details are lost. Many have printed or hand-lettered stickers – many have since fallen out after forty years

I joined the Western Australian Woodturners Association (WAWA) in 1990. I wasn't a turner, but I wanted to meet people who were. Once it was known that I was looking for thimbles made of different wood, the monthly meetings provided great joy for this collector, and my collection grew exponentially. Once I moved to Queensland, I joined the Queensland Woodturners Association (QWA).

One can see which turners knew the purpose for which a thimble is made – there will be indentations or rings on the apex to aid in sewing.

A popular decoration may be lines burnt into the timber. A good finish will show off the timber's grain. I have included handpainted thimbles. Where the maker isn't known I have placed the thimbles under the painter's name.

I have found **182** different woods. Most are local or indigenous woods and there is a selection of wood from other countries. I love seeing burls which turners love as there is no grain to follow in a burl. I have found a couple of turners who used the scientific name when sharing the wood used. Blackboy was the accepted term for grass trees – it is no longer used. Where it was used, I have followed suit.

I have added dates for thimbles when I acquired them – they are not lettered in the thimbles, rather indicating the era.

The first wooden thimble I saw in use was Mum's. She bought after migrating to South Africa in 1931. She made all our clothes, and this thimble was always present – even when she made my wedding dress. It is my most treasure thimble



Mum's stinkwood thimble

At the end, please join my journey with my adventure thru Australian trees

[For other wooden thimble topics see](#)  
Modern British hand-decorated wooden thimbles  
Scottish wooden thimbles

**Pat Adam**

Kingston Adelaide  
Adams handpainted blank Robert Herron thimbles  
South Australia lettered on the verso



kangaroo



koala



**Keith Adams**

Port Macquarie New South Wales  
thimbles not signed



handpainted top hat with an opal and silver Sydney Opera House atop made by Peter Grossman, a Sydney silversmith

**Roy Aldridge**

St George Queensland  
stickers accompany thimbles at purchase with name of maker and the wood used – too big to fit into the thimbles



**African blackwood**  
2000



**conkerberry**  
2000



**coolibah burl**  
2000



**red cedar**



Handcrafted By  
ROY ALDRIDGE  
P.O. Box 74  
St George 4487 Qld

**Syd Anderson**

Longreach Queensland  
 thimbles not signed nor wood named  
 1990



**David Appleby**

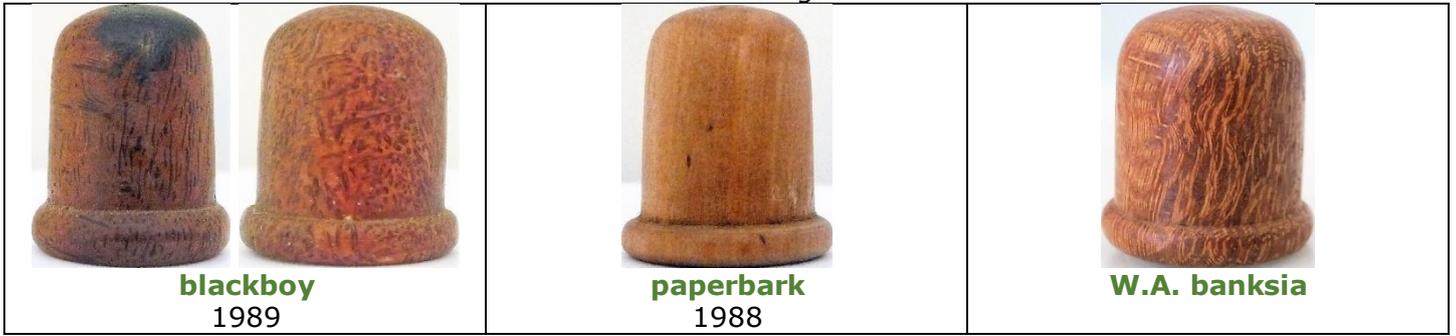
Newcastle New South Wales

Appleby was a Master woodturner who turned wooden thimbles. Encouraged by Barbara Kelly, who was the outlet for his thimbles, David used a wide variety of Australian timbers to create his sturdy range of thimbles. In 1988 this turner had one of his wooden thimbles presented to Queen Elizabeth II during her visit to Newcastle for the Bicentenary celebrations. He died in 1988 before it could be presented to the Queen.

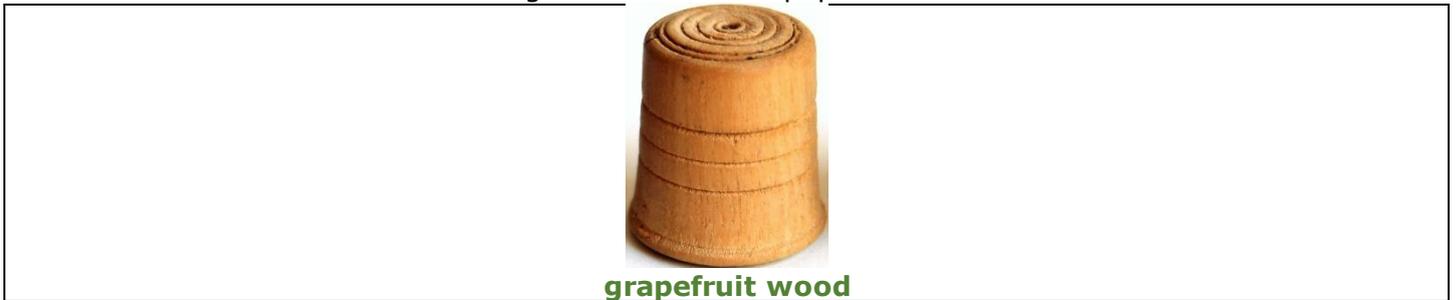
Other timbers used: **brushwood - cedar - colonial pine - rosewood - silky oak**  
 thimbles not signed nor wood named



**Eric Barnes**  
Western Australia  
thimbles not signed



**Vic Bickett**  
Victoria  
signed - wood is on paper insert



**Doug Birrell**  
Melbourne Victoria

Doug Birrell may be familiar to 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 incorporated pyrography in his designs. Doug created many of the wooden needlework tool commemoratives for the biennial NTCSA conferences  
Doug died in October 2025  
wood named on plain wood





The first issue of the original,  
genuine, authentic and verifiable  
**FRIAR TUCK THIMBLE**  
Turned from Hackberry

Friar Tuck  
hackbury - sycamore



Hindenloopen style  
various grounds



inlaid



laminated



Love eternal for Vlada  
2016



'Just a Thimble-Full'  
2000



Minis (his Tom Thumb)

wood used: **black heart sassafras** – **celery top pine** – **huon pine** - **jarrah** - **Otways blackwood** – **Queensland silky oak** - **river red gum** - **silver silkwood** – **Western Australian sheoak**  
2000-2002



Runic lettering  
F N R



Theo Thimble  
R: mini



**blackwood**



**eucalyptus burl**  
2000



**mallee root**  
2000



**pear**



**Cotoneaster**

NTCSA Conference 1994

bands represent two NTCSA founder members Helen Cunningham and Nancy Crooks who died in 2006

*2006 Commemorative Thimble*  
*The humble thimble is an integral part of the sewing workbox just as all our members are an intrinsic part of our Society.*  
*NTCSA dedicates this thimble to all thimble collectors and, in particular, to two of our long-standing members who sadly passed away this year.*  
*Nancy Crooks and Helen Cunningham*  
*Both Nancy and Helen were founding, active and dedicated members of our Society, each giving in their own way.*



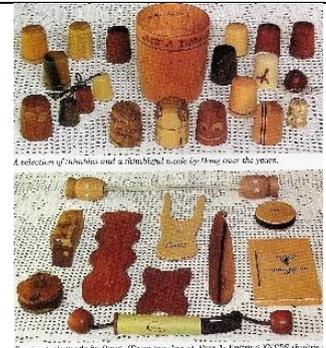
**silver leaf**  
2000



**tiger myrtle**



**WA black sheoak**



range of Birrell's output



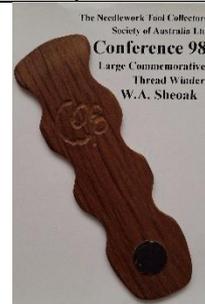
NTCSA Corroboree 1992 pinwheel  
**silver silkwood**



**Queensland sycamore**  
NTCSA Conference 1994 KNEPS - knitting needle  
end protectors



NTCSA Covention 1996 cleek  
**sassafras**



NTCSA Conference 1998 thread winder  
**W.A. sheoak**



NTCSA Conference 1998 thread winder  
**W.A. sheoak**



NTCSA Covention 2000 needlebook  
**huon pine**



NTCSA Conference 2002 lucet



NTCSA Conference 2008 thread winders



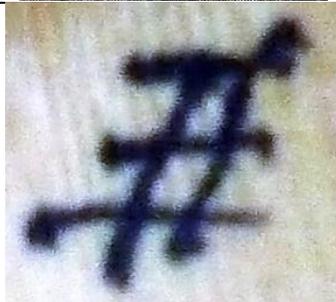
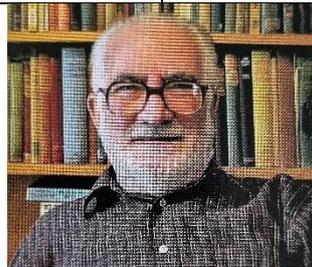
NTCSA Conference 2010 needleholder  
one end opens with pull tag



needleholder  
**apricot**



thread holder  
**black heart sassafras**



Birrell mark

**Barry Black**

Bungendore New South Wales



needlecase  
**sheoak**

**Elaine Boyd**

Perth

WAWA member

thimbles not signed - wood named sometimes



**Kath and Trevor Bretag**

South Australia.

Small wooden boxes containing mini wooden thimbles in matching timbers are the forte of this couple.

Items not signed and wood not named tho an accompanying card. Other timber: **hakea**



**Mark Brett**



**Ray Brittain (R.B.)**

Brisbane

What began as a part-time hobby, became a passion on his retirement for Ray. He has experimented with different shapes and his quilters' thimbles in local Queensland wood is most useful with their concave apex wood named

 <p>carbeen</p>	 <p>ironbark</p>	 <p>michelia</p>	 <p>michelia champach</p>
 <p>Norfolk pine 1997</p>	 <p>quilter's</p>	 <p>silky oak</p>	 <p>slash pine</p>
 <p>cleek rosewood</p>	 <p>needlecase</p>	 <p>needlecase michelia</p>	 <p>needlecase red cedar</p>
 <p>sewing kit carbeen</p>	 <p>sewing kit ironbark</p>	 <p>sewing kit leadwood</p>	
 <p>sewing kit slash pine</p>	 <p>sewing kit Tasmanian blackwood</p>	 <p>sewing kit Tasmanian blackwood</p>	 <p>sewing kit</p>



tape measure

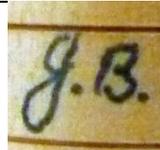


R.B mark

**John Brooks**  
Western Australia



**sandalwood**  
1996



### BTW Eco Linea

These souvenir handpainted thimbles have different woods used for the attachments from the thimble. Most have 'Australia' lettered vertically on verso thimbles not signed - nor wood named



Kangaroo  
2003



koala



flag



penguin



platypus



sheep

## Calfra-Leak Products

Tasmania



large travelling kit (92mm high) contains **blackwood** thimble and four glass phials for needles etc  
**sheoak casuarina**  
2000

## Alan Carmichael

Ravenswood Queensland

no maker's mark



**sandalwood**  
1989

## Jim Clarke

Perth

WAWA member

no maker's mark



tailor's  
**sheoak**  
1988



**black morel**  
1990



quilter's  
**karri**

no photo

tailor's  
**hickory**  
1990



**lignum vitae**



**lilic**  
1990



**mulberry**  
1990



**olive**  
1988



**Neville W Clarke**  
Bongaree Queensland

no photo

needlecase  
**Tasmanian blackwood**

**Collings**  
Whyalla South Australia  
one of the few woodturners to use scientific tree names  
no maker's mark

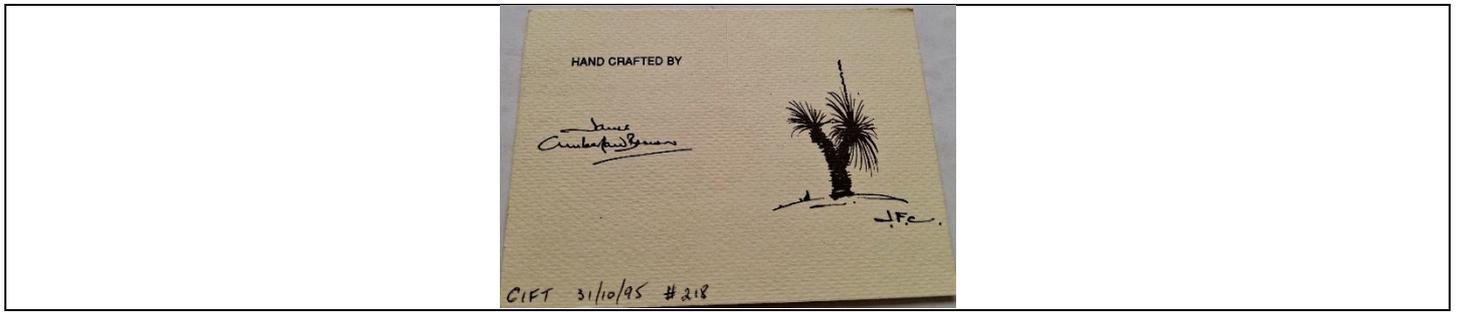


**Greg Cranwell (G.C.)**  
 McLaren Vale South Australia  
 wood not named  
 1987-1988

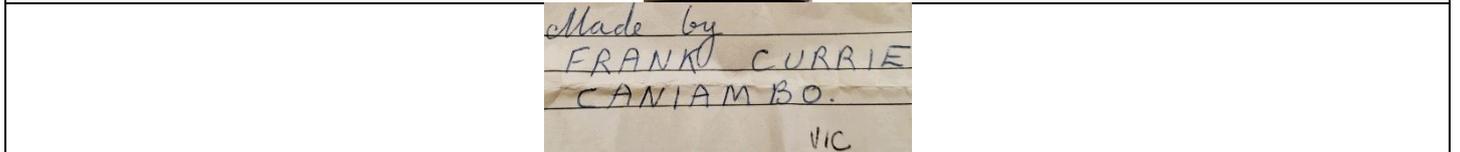


**James Cumberland Brown**  
 York; Fremantle WA  
 thimbles are unsigned nor wood named

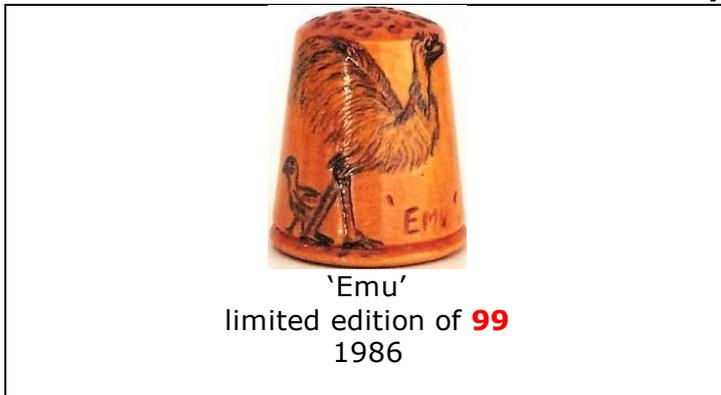




**Frank Currie**  
Caniambo Victoria



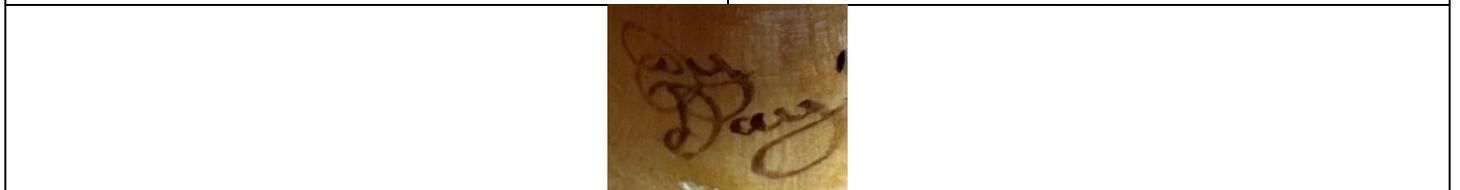
**Gay Day**



'Emu'  
limited edition of **99**  
1986



'Koala Australia'  
**melaleuca**  
limited edition of **99**  
1986



**Val de Vries**  
 Clare South Australia  
 De Vries sold principally thru The Thimble Guild  
 signed on rim

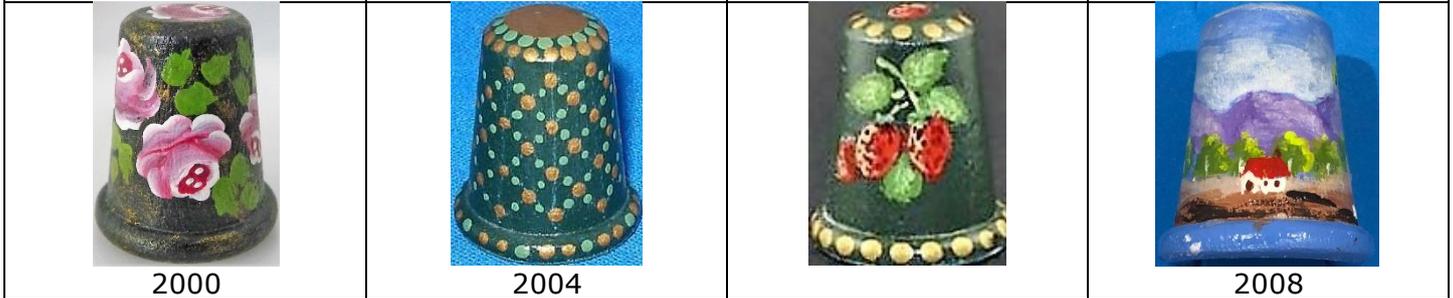


2003



2003

2008



2000

2004

2008



sewing set



**Andy Dmytryk**



**mahogany**

**Dave Dunn**

McLaren Vale South Australia  
thimbles not signed - nor wood named



**apricot**



**ash**



**blackwood**



**cotoneaster**



**mulberry**



**oak**



**osage orange**



**quandong**



**red gum**



**she oak**



**silky oak**  
1990



**tallow**



**teak**



**walnut**

**Harry Ellison**  
South Australia  
died in 1989  
wood is named



cotoneaster



peach

**Bridget Fairchild**

Perth

<https://www.lacebobbins-findthemaker.com/bridget-fairchild.html>



lace bobbins – unsigned, scenes named and dated

**Peter Filmer**

Tharwa ACT

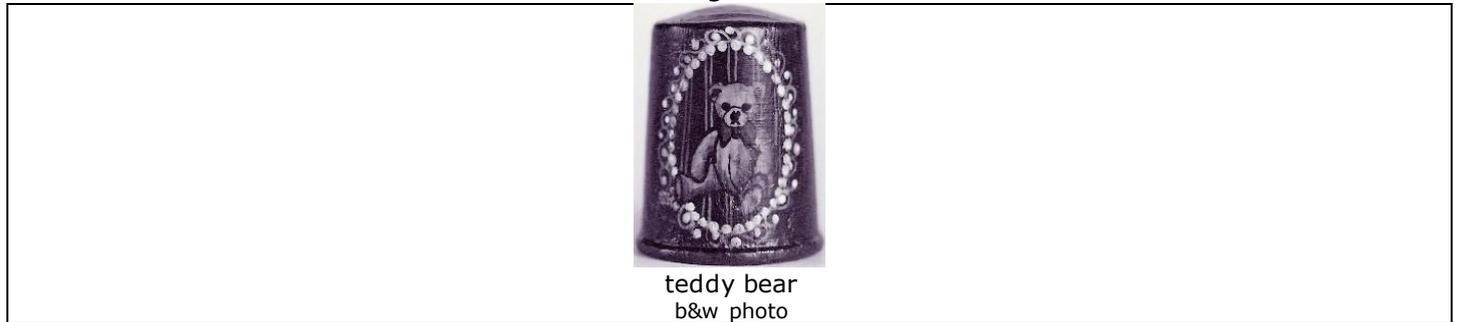
thimbles not signed – wood named on stickers inside  
other woods used for shuttles: **cedar – jarrah – native olive – tallow**



**Ruth Floth**

Central New South Wales coast

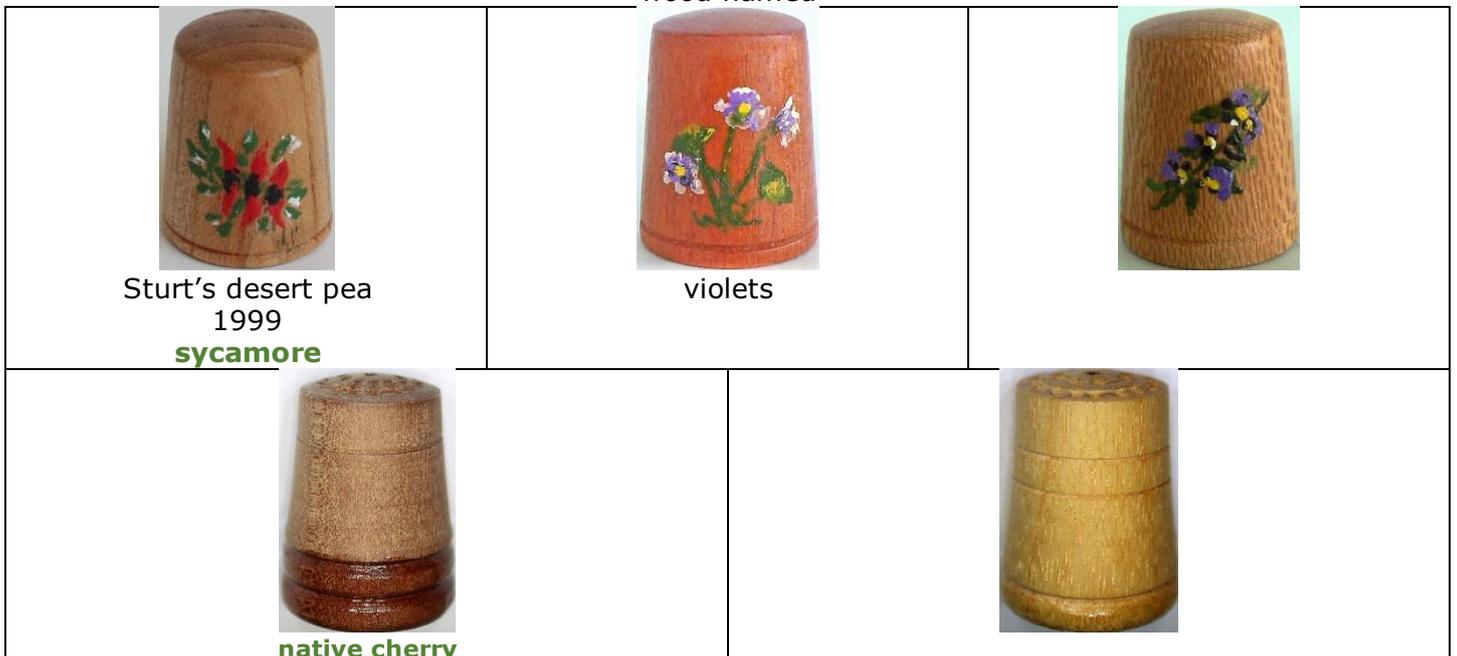
Floth has handpainted them in a folk-art style  
signed



**Rosalyn Forster (RF)**

Warrandyte Victoria

thimbles made by Doug Birrell  
wood named





lace bobbins – detail at R



**Lyn Foster**

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 thimbles made by Robert Herron of Tasmania.



**huon pine**  
dated '93'  
signed

no photo

pink rose and ribbons and lace on black ground  
unsigned

**Ian Garth**

Horsham Victoria

some signed - thimbles marked with numbers



**African bean** 5



**blackheart sassafras**  
3



**concald alves** 1



**red river gum** 2



**Victorian blackwood** 4



**WA buloke**  
named

**Peter Gertler**

Melbourne

made for The Embroiderers Guild Victoria 2000



workbox  
**jarrah**

**Gil**



needlecase  
**silver ash**

**Russ Godden**

Tamworth



tape measure  
**walnut**  
1999

**Sue Gowan (SJG)**

Brisbane

made under the tutelage of Col Ward

signed and wood named



**rosewood**  
1993

**Neil Goyen**

Warrnambool Victoria  
 thimbles not signed – nor wood named  
 2006



**banksia**



**Murray pine**



thimble holder

**Bob Greschke**

Born in Germany, Bob settled in Australia. Margaret Greschke (MG) handpainted his thimbles featuring a range of different designs for The Thimble Guild  
 thimbles not signed – nor wood named



Santa with kangaroo sleigh  
 1993



possum



Aborigine  
 didgeridoo scene  
 all round



'Kangaroo Paw  
 WA'



possum



'Scarlet Robin'



'Superb Blue Wren'



koala



'Ashes 93'  
 'Australia'  
**willow**



bush cottage



platypus  
b&w photo



nesting thimbles  
**jarrah**



nesting thimbles  
**myrtlewood**



nesting thimbles  
**sassafras**



'Frog a wooing go'  
handpainted nesting thimbles by Ann Wallace of  
Pan Arts, Sydney  
b&w photo



koala  
handpainted base by Ann Wallace of Pan Arts,  
Sydney  
pewter koala with opal Peter Grossman  
b&w photo



### Margaret Hagan

South Australia

As well as being a well-known silversmith Hagan is a woodturner and she incorporates her silver work into her turned thimbles.

items not signed – nor wood named



thimble and matching thimble case  
thimble has a slice of Colwell jade as the apex which fits into  
a hole in the lid of the box  
**red gum**  
also available in **blackwood**



needlecase with sterling  
silver thimble marked  
HAGAN  
**red gum**

**Margaret Handley**

This doll artist handpainted her thimbles with apex and the inside of the thimbles being gold painted  
thimbles not signed – nor wood named



b&w photo

**Roy Hardie**

Brisbane

QWA member

items not signed – nor wood named



silky oak



quik-unpick  
red cedar  
1997

**Lewis Harper**

Geelong Victoria

thimbles are signed - wood not named

1991



boxthorn



cyprus



English walnut



grey gum



liquid amber



nyorta



pear



peppercorn



vergilia



zebrano



Lewis Harper Geelong

**John Hartwig**

Sunshine Coast Queensland



matching needlecase  
2012

South American cherry

**Robert Herron**

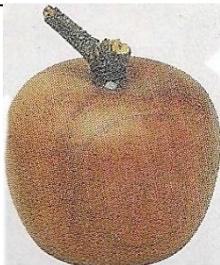
Riverside, Tasmania

Herron has been turning thimbles from Tasmanian timbers since 1980 and he was still actively creating thimbles in November 2018. He is our most prolific and innovative and worked mainly in **huon pine**. thimbles are hand decorated by [Lisa Clarke](#) - [Thea Peschar](#) - [Joanna Wigzell](#) - [Dianne Williams](#), all with the Herron sticker inside

Herron also sold his thimbles thru [The Thimble Guild](#) and [Gimbels](#) (Maine)



'1788-1988'  
huon pine



apple  
huon pine



apple and pear  
huon pine on blackwood



breaddough  
huon pine - sassafras



convict  
handpainted ball and chain  
**huon pine**



grandmother and  
granddaughter  
**sassafras**



gumnuts  
R: **eucalyptus**



history thimble  
**burmese teak** from railway carriage  
with a history note



'Just a Thimbleful'  
**huon pine**



laminated  
R: 2018



mouse  
**huon pine** on **blackwood**



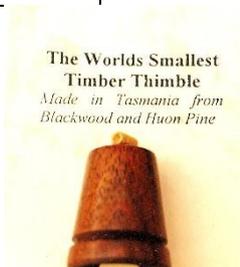
one cent coin on apex



opal in apex



pear  
**huon pine**



smallest timber thimble in the  
world  
**huon pine** on **blackwood**  
1999



stickware  
made with 100 pieces  
1989



tailor's  
**huon - sassafras**



**camphor laurel**



**camphorwood**



**casuarina**



**huon pine**



**Tasmanian goldey wood**



**Tasmanian huon pine**  
strangely named as  
huon is only found in  
southwestern corner of  
the state



**Tasmanian myrtle**



**Tasmanian horizontal**  
with a tree note  
1989



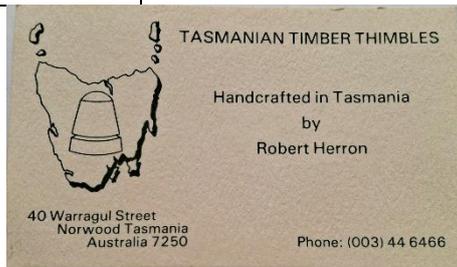
**Tasmanian waratah**  
1990



needlecase  
**huon pine and blackwood**



**pincushion combined pintray**



card 2006

**Lisa Clarke**

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



**Freya Peschar**

Herron commissioned Freya as an artist to pyrograph Australian fauna on his thimbles. Not many of these sets were produced some are signed





echidna – feather-tailed possum – wombat – platypus – sugar glider – wallaby – koala – kangaroo  
1990



**Joanna Wigzell**

Some of Herron's thimbles were handpainted by his daughter Joanna Wigzell. They depict native Australian fauna. 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 thimble signed





'wombat'



'Clarendon House'  
(near Launceston)



### Dianne Williams

Herron's thimbles were handpainted with wildflowers by this former Tasmanian artist. Robert's gold sticker is sometimes inside – only identifying the wood used unsigned



wattle



wattle



wattle



wattle  
**Tasmanian  
blackwood**



Christmas bells



Tasmanian  
eucalyptus  
1987



waratah



waratah





heath  
myrtle wood



black-eyed Susan  
celery-top pine  
1990



1987



**Adrian Hunt**

thimbles not signed - nor wood named



blackwood

**Indonesian**

It seems sad that it takes painters from foreign shores to produce these Aboriginal-type dot painted thimbles. They were imported into Sydney by a small company in Sydney and sold at The Rocks They have also sold by Pan Arts who also sold them to The Thimble Guild in late 2003 they are similar to those handpainted by Aboriginal artist Vicky Winters of Sydney in 1990s Handpainted all over, including the apex, the fauna seems hidden amongst the dots There is a cockatoo with the Spanish 'cacatua' some designs include 'Australia' as well



Aboriginal ...



Ayers Rock



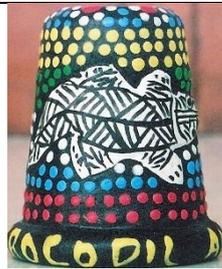
cacatua



cockatoo



cockatoo



crocodil (sic) Australia



crocodile



echidna



echidna



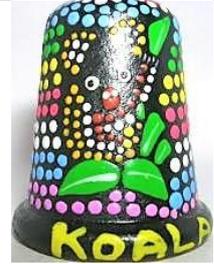
emu



kangaroo



kangaroo Australia



koala



koala and baby  
Australia  
2001



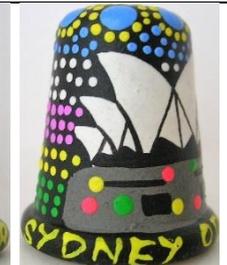
kookaburra



platypus



Sydney Opera House



Sydney Opera House



wombat

**Jim**  
Western Australia



karri

**T W Kettle**

Western Australia

thimbles not signed - nor wood named



jarrah  
1989

**Don Keynes**

Busselton Western Australia

thimbles not signed - wood named

1991



karri hazel



persoonia



York gum burl

**Anga Kooiwind**

Groningen Netherlands



'Congratulations bicentennial Australia 1788-1988'

**Jorgen Kristensen**

Hawthorn, Melbourne

Born in Scandinavia, Margareta Kristensen moved to live in Victoria. In 2003, her husband's thimbles are handpainted with naïve designs



bride  
2003





needlecase



Margaretha's initials

**Jim Lalor**



robinia

**Tim Legg**

Timbo's Shop

Browns Plain Queensland



Shaker workbox

**Bob Malacari (BM)**

Perth  
1990

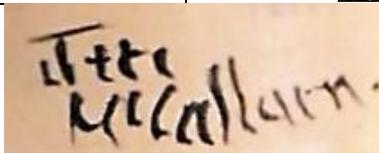
 <p><b>banksia nut</b></p>	 <p><b>blackboy</b></p>	 <p><b>coastal banksia</b></p>	 <p><b>jam</b></p>
 <p><b>jarrah</b></p>	 <p><b>jarrah burl</b></p>	 <p><b>mallee</b></p>	 <p><b>morrell</b></p>
 <p><b>mulga</b></p>	 <p><b>needlewood</b></p>	 <p><b>sandalwood</b> Embroiderers Guild of WA 1969-1990</p>	 <p><b>she-oak</b> quilter's</p>
 <p><b>she-oak</b> Embroiderers Guild of WA 1969-1990</p>			
			

**Dean Malcolm**  
Albany Western Australia



needleholder in woman's shape  
**jarrah**

**Jen McCallum**  
Strathalbyn South Australia



**Heather McLean**  
Balandra Crafts  
Scotland  
signed



male convict  
'Bound for Botany Bay'  
1988



female convict  
'Bound for Botany Bay'  
1988



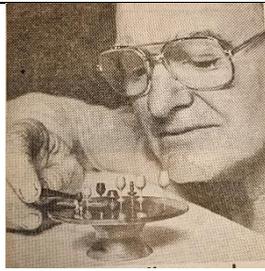
**Keith McQueen**

Perth

WAWA member

thinly turned thimbles – Mrs McQueen did the lettering  
signed inside – wood named on outside  
1990

 <p><b>beefwood</b></p>	 <p><b>Brazilian purpleheart</b></p>	 <p><b>carob</b></p>	 <p><b>gimlet</b></p>
 <p><b>grevillea candelabroides</b></p>	 <p><b>hakea</b></p>	 <p><b>jam W.A.</b></p>	 <p><b>marri</b></p>
 <p><b>Moreton Bay fig</b></p>	 <p><b>native cyprus</b></p>	 <p><b>Norfolk Island pine</b></p>	 <p><b>N.W. almond</b></p>
 <p><b>Plane tree</b></p>	 <p><b>poplar</b></p>	 <p><b>robinia</b></p>	 <p><b>salmon gum</b></p>
 <p><b>W.A. christmas tree</b></p>	 <p><b>woody pear</b></p>	 <p><b>yellow tingle</b></p>	 <p><b>York gum burl</b></p>
			



1988

### Sandra Menger

Brisbane

Sandra has been practising pyrography (poker work) for over 25 years (by 1998). Since 1996, she has used her skills to burn the tiniest floral designs on Brisbane's Col Ward's plain thimbles. She also commissioned thimbles in shapes she required. Menger carved into the wood and then used her pyrography skills



carved



'Christmas bush'



*Grevillea glauca* 'Bushman's peg'



gumnuts

R: **hoop pine**



laminated



mini size  
gumnuts - wattle  
1999



mushrooms



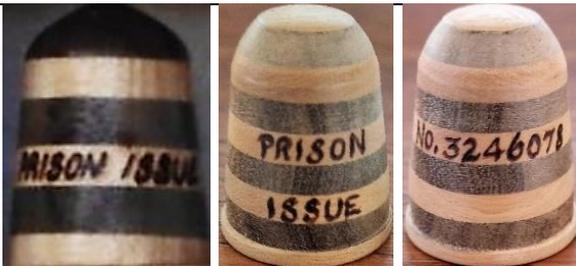
pencil top



outline shape of Australian  
*'The Australian Institution usually known as 'The Dunny''*



outline shape of Australian  
 gum nuts with border of Australian flowers  
 b&w photo



PRISON ISSUE No, 3246071  
 with convict stripes  
 1998



red rose



shell



stones



Swagman with billy tea  
 handle and teabag inside  
**camphor laurel**  
 1999



thimble threaded needle gilt  
 scissors affixed



thimble  
 gilt scissors affixed



toilet with redback spider



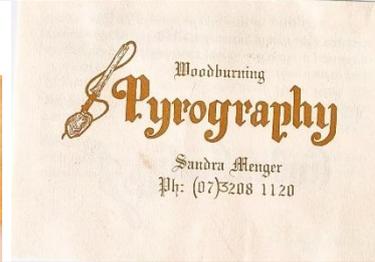
wattle



'Fix-it' sewing kit



tape measures

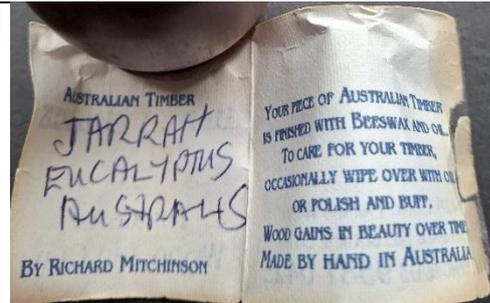


**MH or NH**



Tasmanian huon pine

**Richard Mitchinson**  
The Beach Shack Melbourne



needlecase  
jarrah

**J Mills**



**Toni Neve**  
Benalla Victoria



red gum



1991



lace bobbins  
1992

**Garth Osmond – Wood “n” Things**  
Victoria



**Bullo buloak**  
tape measure



**George Pearce**  
Cooroora Queensland



camphor laurel

## Platypus Gallery

Melbourne

this is the wholesaler who assembled the thimbles  
thimbles not signed (sometimes intertwined PG)- nor wood named



## Ray Pope



iroko wood

## John Read

Perth



**Geoff Riley**  
Melbourne  
died in 1986



Needlecase with plastic thimble  
'blue wren'



needlecase  
'Greetings from Castlemaine'

**Trevor S**



sassafras

**Georgia Seitz**  
Alaska USA



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



'Queensland Tatters'  
Cooktown orchid

**Sew Creative**  
Gatton Queensland



buttons

**Don Shiel**  
Melbourne



**blackwood**

**Ron Smith**  
Perth  
WAWA member  
thimbles not signed  
1992



**blackwood**



**boree**

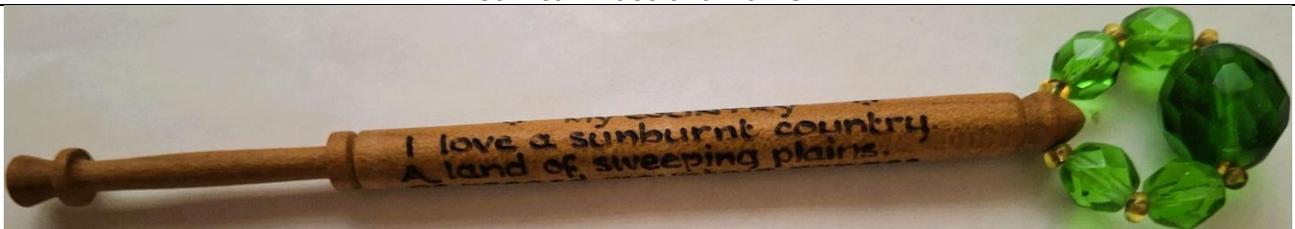


**olive mangrove**

**Janet Soo**  
bobbin not signed



lace bobbin  
'I still call Australia home ...'



lace bobbin  
'I love a sunburnt country ...'

**Mike St Clair**  
Canberra  
thimbles not signed  
1989



**blackwood**



**sassafras**



**silky oak**

### Olga Stack

Perth

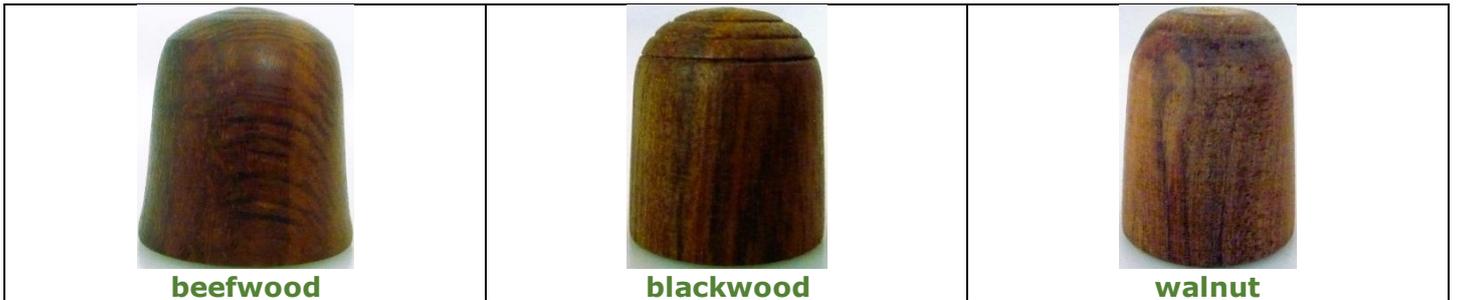
Olga Stack was enterprising enough to place an advertisement for her folk-art thimbles in the Kalgoorlie Airport, Western Australia. Her floral thimbles are all designed over a painted background and dated 1997



### Alan Start

Victoria

thimbles not signed - nor wood named  
1997



**Raie & Trevor Summers**

The Spindle Tree

Hobart Tasmania

wood named on sticker



sassafras



**Lynn Syme**

Queensland

thimbles not signed



rose alder

**GJT**



black heart sassafras



lemon-scented gum



olive



huon pine



huon pine  
'Adelaide - Adelaide'



maker's mark is sometimes on the outside (L) – mainly signed on the inside (R)

### The Deepings Woodturner

Nicholls Rivulet Tasmania

thimbles not signed – nor wood named

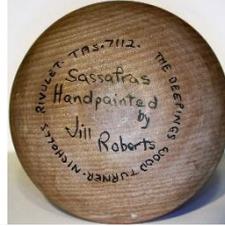
 <p>'Corroboree 90' (NTCSA) handpainted by <u>Fiona Curry</u> (FC) <b>huon pine</b> limited to <b>150</b></p>	 <p>gumnuts handpainted by <u>Fiona Curry</u> (FC) <b>huon pine</b> mini size</p>	 <p>gumnuts handpainted by <u>Fiona Curry</u> (FC) <b>huon pine</b> mini size</p>	
			
 <p><b>blackwood</b></p>	 <p><b>leatherwood</b></p>		
 <p>clown darner- needlecase <b>sassafras</b> handpainted by <u>Jill Roberts</u> 1992</p>	 <p>embroiderer darner- needlecase handpainted by <u>Jill Roberts</u></p>	 <p>darner-needlecase handpainted by <u>Jill Roberts</u></p>	 <p>happy birthday darner- needlecase handpainted by <u>Jill Roberts</u></p>



violinist darner-needlecase  
handpainted by Jill Roberts



fairy darner-needlecase  
handpainted by Jill Roberts



### Mac Thomas



coachwood

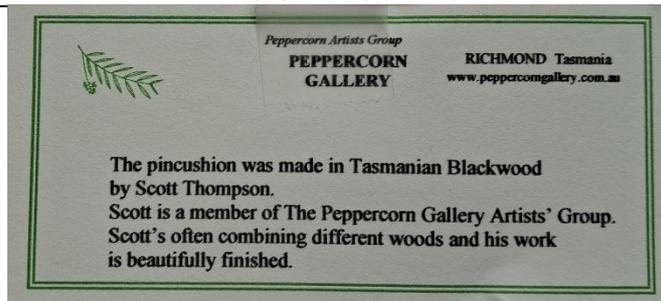


huon pine

**Scott Thompson**  
Peppercorn Gallery  
Richmond Tasmania  
not signed



pincushion  
**Tasmanian blackwood**  
'N.T.C.S.A. 1987-2012'



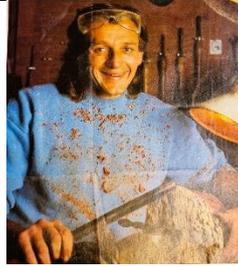
**Paul Tiernan**  
Newcastle  
signed – wood unnamed  
1999



cedar



rosewood



1990

**Ian Trafford-Walker (ITW)**  
Murwillumbah

With an abundance of fallen timber on his property in northern New South Wales Ian encouraged his sons to utilise small pieces of bloodwood and carve out thimbles. No two are the same shape but the smoothness has taken hours of finishing to bring out the marvellous colours. This was in 2000, and a strictly limited number were produced



bloodwood  
2000



bloodwood  
carved by his sons



**David Tulloch**  
South Australia

Malcolm Walter of Stirling South Australia commissioned Tulloch's wooden thimbles for applying his sterling silver pewter or brass motifs



**E.W.**



**Beryl Ward (BJW)**

Brisbane

using her husband Col's thimbles Beryl turned to handpainting them in 1990s



**Col Ward**

Brisbane

Ward being passionate about the timbers of Australia he was searching for a medium to showcase his hobby of wood collecting. From when he turned his first wooden thimble in 1991, by 2000 he had turned over 3000 thimbles from more than 650 timbers. Through his membership of the International Wood Collectors Society Col actively sought out pieces of timber that would reflect the beauty of the grain and used ten different shapes to showcase this

1993-1997

Col died in 2004



 <b>bloodwood</b>	 <b>budgeroo</b> 1999	 <b>bugwood</b>	 <b>bush oak</b>
 <b>calantas</b>	 <b>coach wood</b>	 <b>coastal cypress</b>	 <b>cockspur</b>
 <b>conkerberry</b>	 <b>corkoak</b>	 <b>cottonwood</b>	 <b>crows ash</b>
 <b>gelong-gang</b>	 <b>golf gum</b>	 <b>grevillea (dyed)</b>	 <b>jacaranda</b>
 <b>jarrah burl</b>	 <b>Jelutong (dyed)</b>	 <b>kwila</b>	 <b>lawyer cane</b>
 <b>loquat</b>	 <b>mango</b>	 <b>moringa</b>	 <b>mountain ash</b>

			
<b>mulga</b>	<b>New Guinea rosewood</b>	<b>padauk</b>	<b>pine (Amish farm)</b>
			
<b>Port Hacking fig</b>	<b>radiata pine</b>	<b>red ash</b>	<b>red cedar</b>
			
<b>red meranti</b>	<b>ridged mulga</b>	<b>rooting fig (ficus sagittate)</b>	<b>rose almond</b>
			
<b>sally wattle</b>	<b>satin sycamore</b>	<b>silky oak</b>	<b>silver leaf ironbark</b>
			
<b>spalid ash</b>	<b>spotted gum</b>	<b>staywood</b>	<b>threaded box</b>
			
<b>tulip oak</b>	<b>turkey bush</b>	<b>waddy</b>	<b>walnut</b>



white cedar



white meranti



yellow cedar



dyed



top hat



**Wayne**

Work of Art

Toowoomba



needlecase  
rosewood

**Dick Weaver**



gidgee

**N West**

NSW

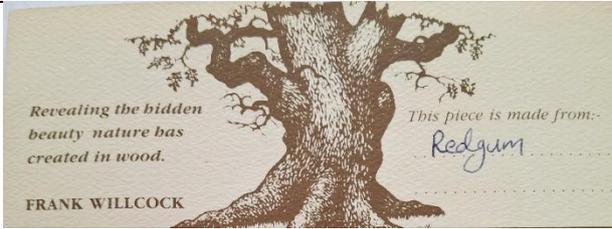


gidgee

**Frank Willcock**  
Goomalibee Woodworks  
Benalla Victoria



**Redgum**  
1990



**Yvonne Winspear (YW)**  
Sydney

there is a gold foil map of Australia up in each apex





L: taller – over china



1986

around **600** of these thimbles were handmade  
**paperbark** over **leatherwood**



'1788-1988'

**120** thimbles of this design were made



**THIMBLE COLLECTOR**



**Yvonne Winspear**  
 40 Mackenzie St., Revesby 2212  
 N.S.W. Australia (02) 773 3698

1980s

**Vicky Winters**

Sydney

Vicky used Robert Herron's huon pine thimbles for her Aboriginal designs  
they are the only thimbles handpainted by an Aboriginal artist  
approximately **30-40** of each design  
unsigned  
1989



needlecases

**Peter Wyer**

Brisbane

QWA member

thimbles not signed – nor wood named



mangrove cedar

**N Wyndham**  
Brisbane



pincushion  
**banksia nut**

**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.



Aboriginal scene



Aboriginal scene



Geraldton wax



koala  
indecipherable initials



koala  
Australia



possum



**finely** handpainted seven paired scenes



myrtle wood

Unsigned thimbles and sewing tools



Acacia pycnatha  
South Australia



Australian rosewood



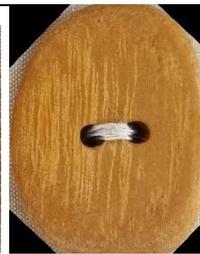
banksia



beech



button  
Ross Tasmania  
classwood



buttons  
McLaren Vale SA



coachwood



coat-of-arms



coin



darner



darner



darner



darner



darner



Gulgong NSW  
**Burdekin plum**



**huon pine**



**huon pine**



**jarrah burl**



Jondaryan Woolshed  
Queensland



**karri**



needlecase  
**jarrah**



needlecase  
Peninsula Wood Turners Guild Frankston Victoria  
**blackwood**  
2000



needlecase  
Peninsula Wood Turners Guild  
Frankston Victoria  
2000



**nundoo**



pincushion  
**mulga**  
Trust in Him at all times



pincushion



pincushion  
**Queensland threadybark oak**



needle gauge  
**Tasmanian horizontalis**



pincushions



**pine - rose**



**red gum**



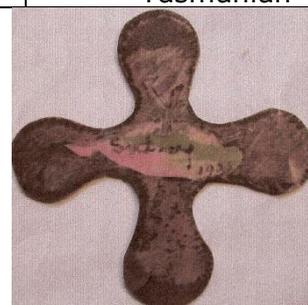
Tasmanian



Tasmanian bush buttons



thimble holder



thread winder  
HP Sydney 1925  
**plywood**



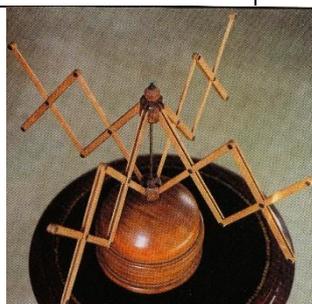
weaving shuttles



weaving shuttles  
Victoria  
signature unclear



Western Australia



woolwinder  
Christmas 1904  
**huon pine**



workbox  
Souvenir of Sydney



**silky oak**



### **My Australian trees journey**

We have visited botanic gardens in all Australian states – not to be missed on any trip to Australia. My first visit to Perth’s Kings Park in 1988 was my introduction to trees of WA. The road with gums planted in memory to our fallen soldiers, as you enter is breathtaking.

Australia’s red dirt is recreated at Cranbourne Botanic Gardens.

There are several treetop walks – at Geeveston Tasmania – Lamington National Park in the gold Coast hinterland. Climb the Gloucester fire lookout tree in Pemberton WA.

Western Australia has the greatest diversity of trees, and the south-west corner has tuarts lining the road. Smell the scent of a lemon-scented gum or sandalwood. I have worked with camphor laurel and that scent is addictive.

I attended the Small Tree Farm in Balingup in south-western Australia for a weekend of learning about trees and had a tree planted in memory of my father.

Only the banksia grandis that grows in Western Australia has nuts suitable for turning.

I am not into scientific names of my beloved trees – just the names I’ve learnt.

Most of these timbers have been turned into thimbles



**boab**  
Kimberleys  
2009



**bottle tree**  
Anzac Square Brisbane  
1993



**bunya pine**  
Bunyas Queensland  
they shed their massive fruit in  
January  
2005



**bushman’s peg**  
Currumundi Queensland  
2011



**celery top pine**  
Geeveston Tahune Tasmania  
2017



**desert oaks**  
Uluru  
2013



**fig**

Mary Cairncross Maleny  
2025



**grass tree**

Cranbourne Botanical Gardens  
Melbourne  
2012



**grevillea candelabroides**

Eneabba Western Australia  
1990



**grey myrtle**

Maleny Botanic Gardens  
Queensland  
2014



**gums**

I have 100s of photos of these amazing tree trunks



**hoop pine**

Kelvin Grove  
these came to my attention  
where Christie's unit has a grove  
of these 85 year old pines  
metres from her deck  
2025



**huon pine**

it's illegal to cut down huon pine  
Geeveston Tahune Tasmania  
2017



**illywarra flame**

their colours light up a whole  
forest  
2017



**jacaranda**

Kelvin Grove Brisbane  
2023



**lancewood**

Longreach  
2021



**marri nuts**

Cranbourne Botanical Gardens  
Melbourne  
1989



**Moreton Bay fig**  
Kelvin Grove Brisbane  
2022



**myrtle**  
Geeveston Tahune  
Tasmania  
2017



**paperbark**  
Swan River Perth  
1988



**poinciana**  
New Farm Park Brisbane  
1990s



**river red gum**  
Murrumbidgee Wagga Wagga – Fitzroy WA



**rose gums**  
Mary Cairncross Maleny Queensland



**salmon gum**



**sausage tree**  
landsborough Queensland  
2025



**scribbly gum**  
Murrumbidgee Wagga Wagga  
2025



**sheoak**  
brown male flowers – Kimberleys  
2009



**silver princess**  
Kings Park Perth  
silver branches show off the gum blossoms  
1988



**snottygobble**  
Currumundi Queensland  
2011



**snow gum**  
Cradle Mountain National Park Tasmania  
a more exotic trunk you'll never see  
2019



**Sydney blue gum**  
National Botanic Gardens  
Canberra  
1989



**walnut**  
Hans Heysen's garden  
Adelaide  
2017



**wattle**  
NSW roadside in winter



**West Australian Christmas tree**  
they light up the bush



## References

- Doug Birrell *Wooden thimbles – possibilities for collectors* Needlework Tool Collectors Society of Australia Newsletter  
May 1999  
Susan Jean Gowan *Thimbles of Australia* 1998
- Norma Shattock *Doug Birrell: wooden thimbles and tools* Needlework Tool Collectors Society of Australia Newsletter  
April 2005  
*Thimble maker: Doug Birrell Australia* TCI Bulletin fall 2007

## Contributors

Lee Bateman | Wendy Brittain | Beverley Dimmick | Joy Earles | Ros Forster | Andrea Griffiths | Margaret Harland  
Sybil Harland | Margaret Hickling | Nicola Kissane | Diane Poesk | Norma Shattock | Jean Taylor | Erin Titmus  
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This listing of Australian wooden 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](mailto:thimbleselect@bigpond.com) TO SHARE YOUR KNOWLEDGE

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**September 2025**