

Scottish wooden thimbles

Catriona Bell – Fiona Danby – Leslie Lamb – Andrew Langford – Heather McLean
Eileen Palmer – Ron Palmer - Christine Philp – Norley Swanson – Trevor Warrington

Scotland's thimbles are dear to my heart so this is my contribution for ensuring these wooden thimbles do not disappear from collectors' memories.

Having compiled an earlier topic on Scotland's Innes Mitchell's thimbles, I am aware that rarely are these thimbles signed (for sale thru The Thimble Guild in the 1980s) – with the exception of Heather McLean.

You may now be able to recognise the artist by the shape of thimble they used – even when there is no signature.

For other Scottish thimble topics see:

Carol Edwards of Coll Pottery and Horizon China thimbles
Highland China thimbles 1977-1986
Innes Mitchell's pyrographed wooden thimbles
Nenthorn Studios thimbles (Scotland) 1985-1986
Roger Harrison of Kelso thimbles 1983-1988

For other handpainted thimble topics see

Australian handpainted thimbles and sewing tools 1973-2014
Cornish Enamels thimbles 1995-1997
Francesca character head thimbles
Gerald Delaney handpainted thimbles
Graham Payne handpainted thimbles 1981-1996
Hazrah handpainted bronze thimbles (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

Catriona Bell – Edinburgh 1995

Whilst Catriona was studying at Art College in Edinburgh in 1995, she found time to practice what she was being taught and created these sycamore thimbles for The Thimble Guild. She pyrographed them, then handpainted her thimbles, where required. The apexes are flat and sometimes handpainted.

These eight designs were the only ones she created for the Guild, which were produced between July and December 1995.

Catriona went on to become a Scottish artist

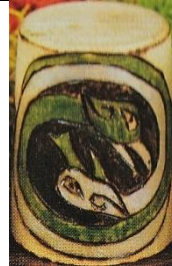
I don't know if these thimbles were marked or signed.



birds
limited to **100**
TTG November 1995



Book of Kells
limited to **95**
TTG December 1995



Book of Kells
limited to **95**
TTG December 1995



Book of Kells
limited to **95**
TTG December 1995



wildflowers on sycamore
daisy – meadow thistle – bluebell – dandelion
pyrographed
limited to **200**
TTG July 1995



personalised
TTG January 1996

Fiona Danby – Rowancraft 1984-1985

Fiona's hand-enamelled discs are set into the apex of [rosewood](#) thimbles. The wooden thimbles have four incised rings and there is a defined rim.

Fiona's thimbles were available thru The Thimble Guild catalogues in 1984-1985. Her thimbles are unsigned.

Each flower thimble was limited to **500** pieces.

Danby only works in enamel, so these are two examples of her hand-enamelled or handpainted brooches, (one being boxed with her label inside). Once the brooches are separated from the box or card, there are no other marks to identify them as Danby's.



			
acorn	bluebells	dog rose	forget-me-not
			
holly	iris	pansy	poppy
			
primrose	rosehip	snowdrop	violet
			
thistle			

Leslie Lamb – Ross-shire (Scottish Highlands) 1984-1986

Once you have seen one of Lamb's handpainted bird thimbles, you will recognise them instantly. The birds are playful and quirky, even seemingly foreshortened, with a dominant eye. They are usually painted on [sycamore](#) thimbles. They were limited to **1000** copies of each. No signature or name of the bird.

His thimbles were available through The Thimble Guild catalogues between 1984-1986.

I have seen examples of his handpainted birds on china thimbles.



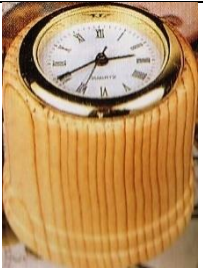
goldfinch

 bullfinch	 dipper applewood b&w photo	 firecrest	 goldfinch
 kingfisher L: wild gean	 stonechat	 stag limited to 250	 wren

Andrew Langford – Langford Woodcrafts, Ayrshire 1995-1998, 2006-2009

Initially Langford, a woodworker, created thimble racks for TTG for a long period. He then tried his hand at turning thimbles - he made a very small output. He also created polyester, acrylic and resin thimbles.

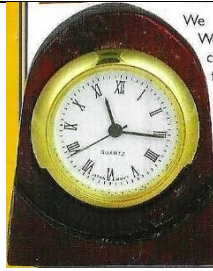
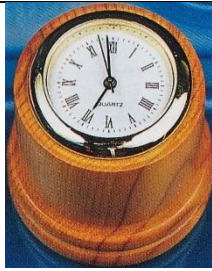
see also: Eileen Palmer as Langford made thimble blanks for her use



miniature analogue clock (1in across)
set into apex

yew

TTG February 1995, September 1996



thimble clock

padauk

TTG August 2006



"Crushed velvet"

several polishings and burnishing
cream

TTG May 1997



Glencoe bog oak

limited to **10**

TTG October 2009



Mediterranean cork oak

oak centre apex

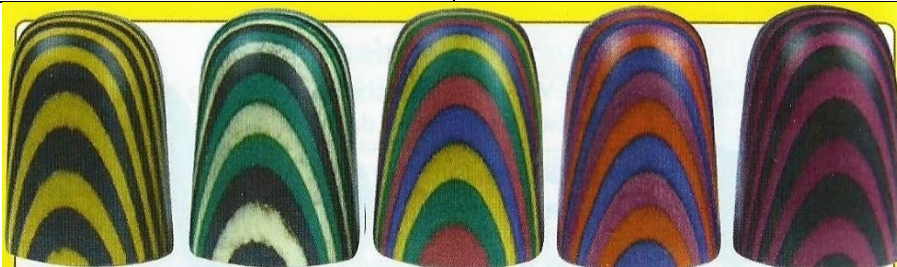
TTG November 2009



Portuguese cork

fashioned around a wood apex

TTG September 1997



harlequin colours set of five
laminated veneer

TTG April 2008



Tunbridge ware style

timbers: maple – cherry – bubinga –
padauk

limited to **100**

TTG March 1998



signs of zodiac set
thimbles of padauk with handcut affixed brass symbols
pine wooden rack
TTG June 1995



thimble-shaped racks in various
timbers



10-shelves red baize-lined thimble
case to hold 150 thimbles
acrylic door
TTG April 2005



acrylic dome thimble rack to hold 32
thimbles
TTG April 2005

Heather McLean – Balandra Crafts 1984-1988

McLean is the most prolific of this batch of Scottish artists, working in pyrography (or pokerwork) on pale [sycamore](#) wood. The miniature images wrapped around the thimbles are executed in wonderful detail – imagine the effort of creating each scene around the thimble, adding the lettering, the signature and the limited number – all with a hot poker stylus. Being handpainted no two thimbles will be identical.

She produced sets of numbered thimbles issued by The Thimble Guild between 1984-1988. The apex is flat and the majority of her sets have marked sloping sides. They are lettered on the apex.

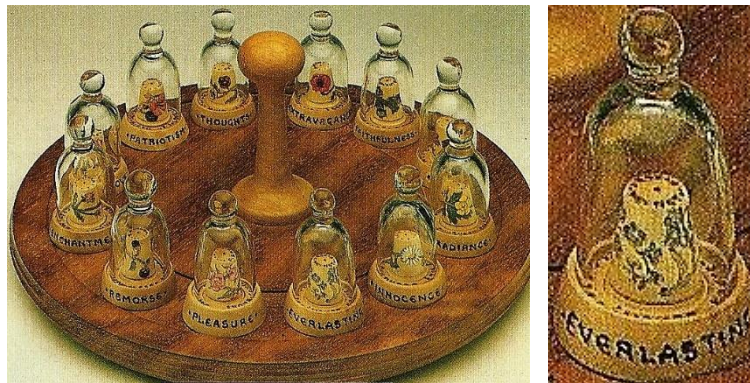
Her thimbles are signed in pyrography with the thimble set number alongside.



The thimbles are in the alphabetic order of the lettering on the apex.

Language of flowers - limited to 175

This set is different: by 1988 she had added colour to her pyrography. Each thimble is placed on a lettered plinth, with the meaning lettered on the bed of the plinth in a mini glass dome.



no photo	no photo		
BRAMBLE REMORSE PLEASE FORGIVE ME - I WAS TOO HASTY	BUTTERCUP RADIANCE YOUR SPLENDOUR IS LIKE THE SUN	CANTERBURY BELLS FAITHFULNESS I TRULY LOVE YOU	CLARKIA PLEASURE YOUR COMPANY DELIGHTS ME
no photo	no photo		no photo
DAISY INNOCENCE THE PURITY OF CHILDHOOD	FORGET-ME-NOT EVERLASTING MEMORY NEVER FORGET ME	NASTURTIUM PATRIOTISM I LOVE MY PLACE OF BIRTH	PANSY THOUGHT YOU ARE EVER ON MY MIND

no photo	no photo	no photo	no photo
PETUNIA HOPE NEVER DESPAIR. HOLD ON	POPPY EXTRAVAGANCE SPOIL YOURSELF – ENJOY LIFE	ROSE AND TWO BUDS SECRET LOVE WE SHARE A SECRET LOVE	VERVAIN ENCHANTMENT YOU HAVE BEWITCHED ME

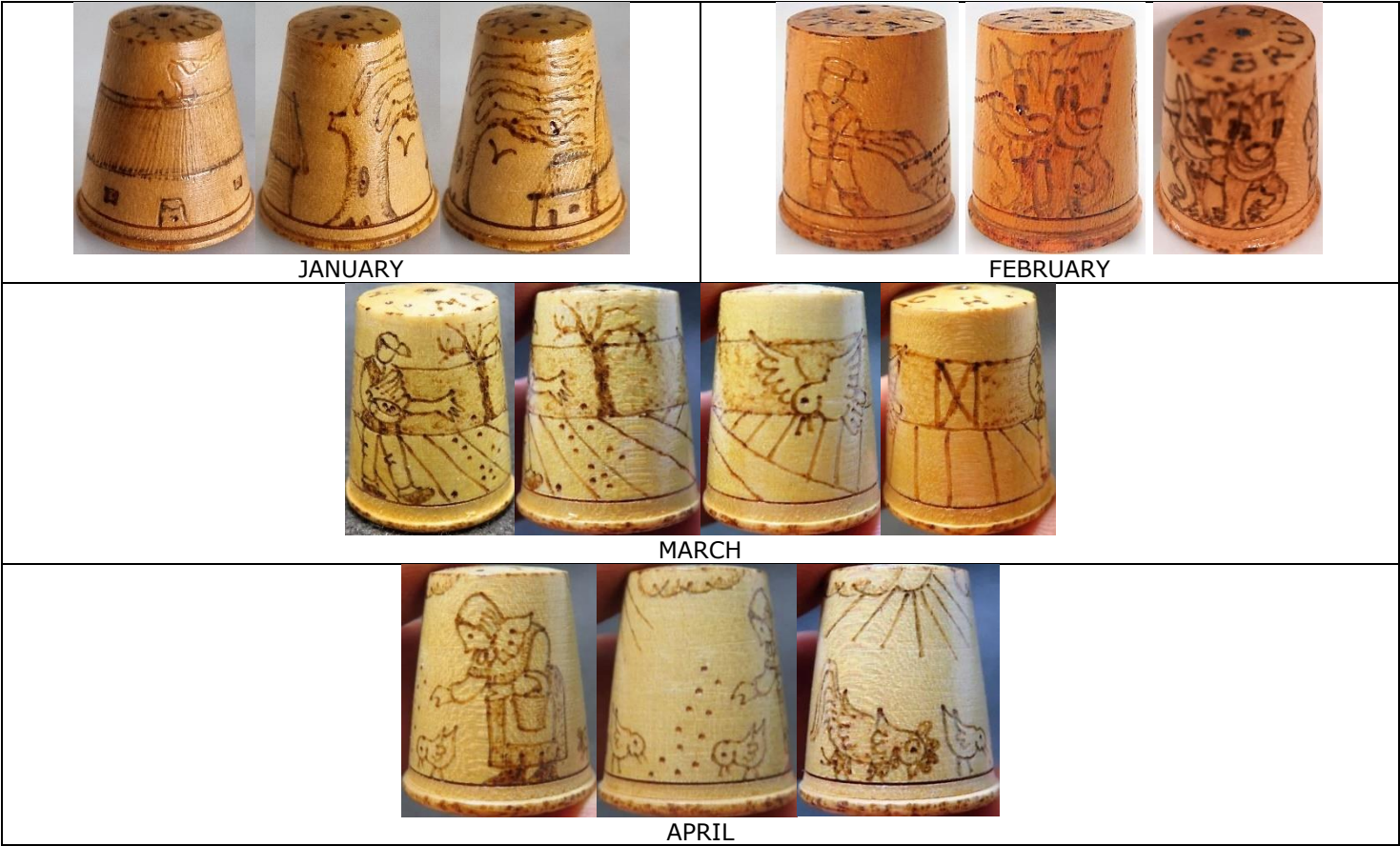
Sunset Song - limited to **250**

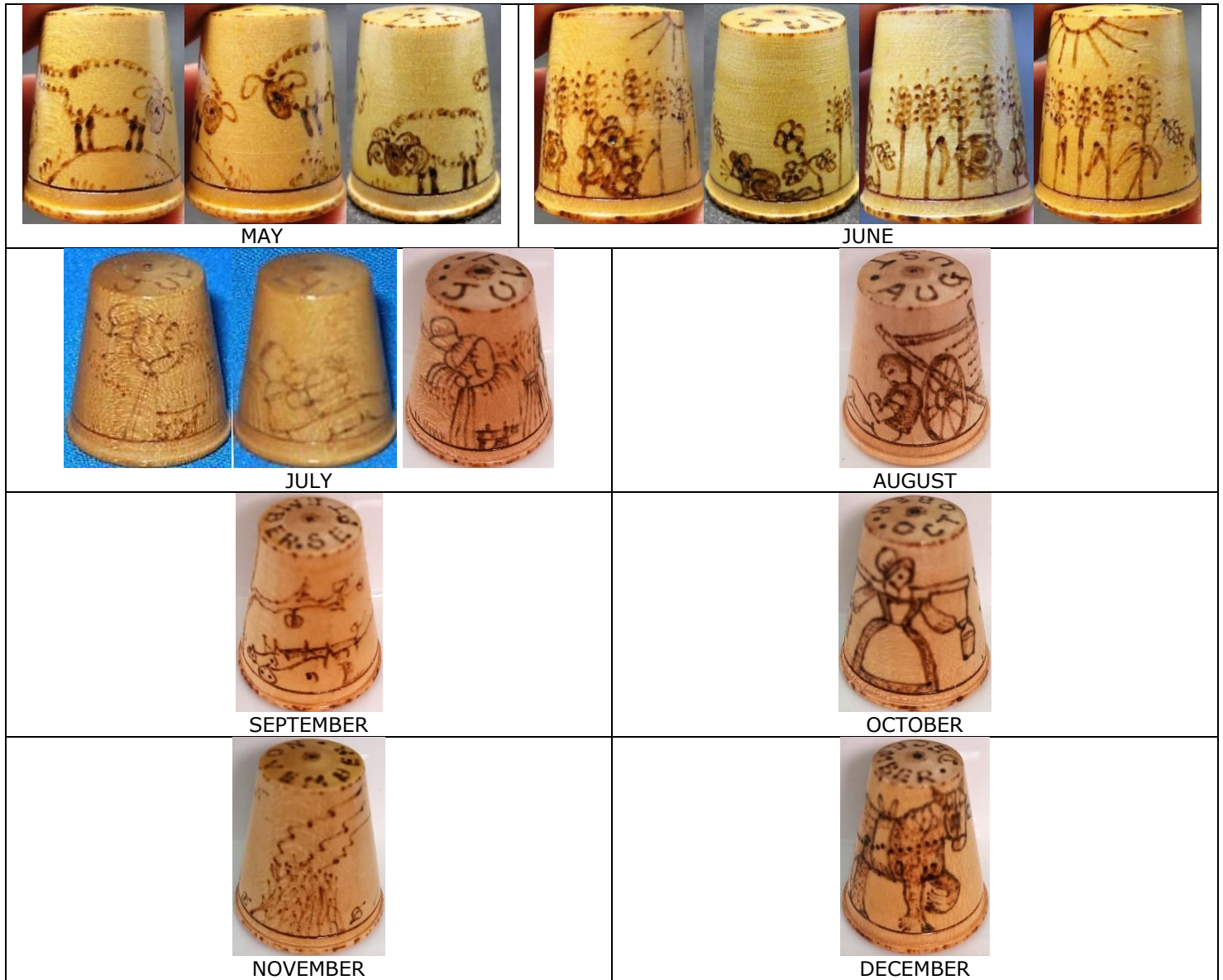


The set name was chosen for the scenes of farming throughout the year thimbles: from the Victorian novel of that name by Lewis Grassie Gibbon. The month is lettered on the apex

The accompanying box (if the whole set was purchased) is signed on the front. The thimbles are arranged on the stepped channel set in the lower section of the box Sunset Song.

The box measures 130mm by 55mm.





Victorian children's street games - limited to 300

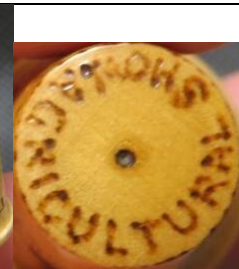


			
MARBLES	PEERIE & WHIP	PEEVERS	SKIPPING

Village customs - limited to 300

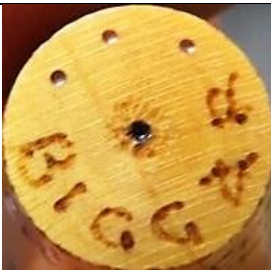
This set has additional lettering to the activity described on the apex: lettered inside is the full name of the month in which that custom takes place.



     			
AGRICULTURAL SHOW AUGUST WILLIS & STEEVENS TRACTION ENGINE			
			
BONFIRE NIGHT NOVEMBER	CAROL SINGING DECEMBER	COMMON RIDING MAY	
 	 	 	
EGG ROLLING MARCH R: EASTER EGGS incorrectly lettered?	FIRST FOOTING JANUARY	HALLOWEEN PARTY OCTOBER	

 HIGHLAND DANCING SEPTEMBER	  MIDSUMMER JUNE	 MORRIS DANCING APRIL
  PANCAKE RACE FEBRUARY	 TUG O' WAR JULY	

Others

     BIGGAR CADGERS BRIG. CORN EXCHANGE limited to 200 TTG October 1986
   JUNE this thimble doesn't fit any of the sets above
     BOUND FOR BOTANY BAY Only one set created for Barbara Kelly to celebrate Australia's bicentenary 1988. Each of the thimbles is housed in a glass domed plinth with the same lettering as the thimbles

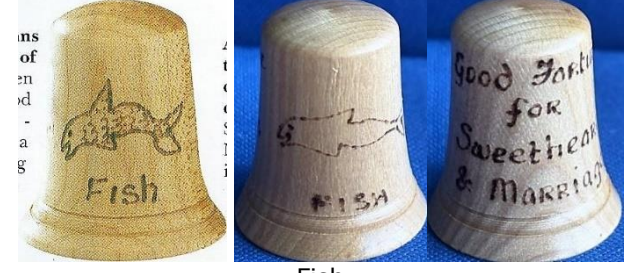
Eileen Palmer – Ronaleen Crafts, Lenkalfoot, Ayrshire

Eileen's thimble creations were offered for sale thru The Thimble Guild in 2001.

Palmer's thimbles are pyrographed on [maple](#) – pale enough to show off her simple symbols.

Andrew Langford, her neighbour, is the probable woodturner.

Her theme for her only set of thimbles is lucky charms, mascots, talismans from around the world. Some of the actual lettering on verso is different from catalogue's description. Do yours have different messages?

 Acorn Health and long life	 Ankh Long life and prosperity
 Beans Protects children & drives away bad influences	 Bells Protection against all types of Evil
 Clover Good fortune	 Elephant Success remover of obstacles
 Fish Good fortune for sweethearts & marriage	 Horseshoe Good fortune
 Keys Love health wealth	 Scarab Health strength regeneration

 Shen Wisdom protection and healing	 Star For protection and love
 Merry Christmas Nollaig Chridheil TTG December 2000	 CASTLE any name could be ordered

Ron Palmer – Ayrshire 2007

I presume that Ron is related to Eileen Palmer? I have only found two of his thimbles offered for sale by TTG.

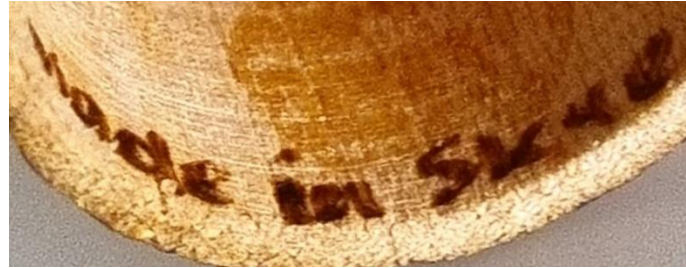
 mahogany and maple in brick wall pattern TTG April 2007	 mahogany and maple in brick wall pattern TTG June 2007
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Christine Philp – Isle of Skye 1986-1988

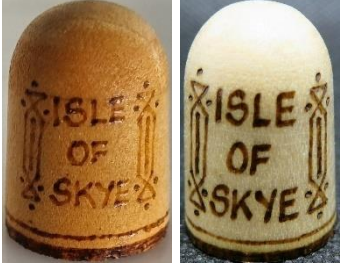
This was the first Scottish artist that I added to my collection. Not only were Philp's thimbles available for purchase thru The Thimble Guild in 1986-1988, they could also be found in tourist shops on Skye.

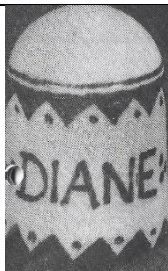
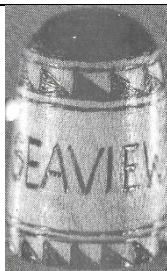
Christie was also a pyrographer – the thimble shape she chose were softly rounded and the thimble was often shaded, giving them a textured look.

The only marking in some of her thimbles is 'Made in Skye' pyrographed on the inner rim.



Tippacanoë is the name of the store where thimbles sold

 Chinese lettering for signs of the zodiac TTG March 1987	 fishing boat TTG January 1987	 Skye cottage
 Celtic symbol with additional colour	 ISLE OF SKYE with Celtic symbols L: tippecanoe wood	 PEACE R: with additional colour TTG March 1987
 pond life TTG February 1987 b&w photo	 Greek lettering for Aries	 WITH LOVE with additional colour

 Philp would pyrograph your name Nordic type design on sycamore TTG December 1986 b&w photo	 Philp would pyrograph your anniversary Celtic design on sycamore TTG August 1987	 Philp would pyrograph your home's name Nordic type design on sycamore TTG June 1987 b&w photo
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Norley Swanson (Highlands) 1987-1988

Norley's small output of handturned thimbles using different timbers, shows some of the Highlands' animals on his smooth, straight-sided thimbles. There are no maker's marks – we are dependent on The Thimble Guild's catalogues for the details below.

			
Badger beech TTG January 1988	Blue tit	Bullfinch TTG August 1987	Fawn beech TTG December 1987
			
Harvest mice beech TTG February 1988	Kingfisher TTG July 1987	Otter sycamore TTG June 1988	Rabbit beech TTG May 1988
			
Red squirrel beech TTG April 1988		Robin elm TTG November 1987	

Trevor Warrington 1988 -1989

Warrington shows his turning skills, creating interestingly-shaped, which he pyrographed or handpainted. His thimbles are unsigned and we are dependent on The Thimble Guild for the names of the timbers used.

In two issues TTG incorrectly named this craftsman as Warington.

 acorn-shaped oak sterling squirrel TTG March 1989	 bonnet pyrographed and handpainted sycamore red rose TTG October 1988	 bonnet sterling rose fabric blue band TTG August 1988
 cottage pyrographed and handpainted	 cottage pyrographed	 cottage pyrographed and handpainted
 cottage pyrographed sycamore maker named as Warrington TTG March 1988		 Pagoda pyrographed sycamore maker named as Warrington TTG March 1988

Contributors

Yolanta Bogdziewicz | Pawel Brzyski | Linda Heggs | Jean Taylor | Krystyna Zagajewska

This listing of Scottish wooden thimbles does not purport to be complete or accurate in all aspects. Rather it invites comment and contribution to add to our knowledge. My thanks to the contributors.

EMAIL thimbleselect@bigpond.com TO SHARE YOUR KNOWLEDGE

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