

Australian advertising thimbles

aluminium – brass – plastic

with a few Australian advertising sewing tools

Having covered brass and sterling silver advertising thimbles from around the world, it is time for me to focus on advertising thimbles here in Australia.

Aluminium advertising thimbles

When I researched the aluminium advertising thimbles for *Thimbles of Australia* in 1997, it was one of the sections of the book that fascinated me most – being non-Australian born, I was not familiar with many of the products that could be advertised on Australian thimbles. I was determined to find an accompanying advertisement of the time or the trade mark registration as proof of being Australian made products.

After publication of the book in 1998, I expected to be deluged with mail, letting me know of Australian brands that I had omitted or not aware of. This was not the case. It will be seventeen years since publication this July 2015, so it is time to share those findings. Back at that time of publication, the images were mainly in black and white – here you will be able to see most of them in full colour.

During my research, it had been fascinating for me to find that there were fifteen known Aussie brands advertised on thimbles: double those that I knew of when I began the research. Of even more significance tho, was that nine of these firms were still in business in the late twentieth century.

How many **new** Australian advertising thimbles have we now discovered? Fourteen. This includes some additional slogans for existing advertising brands on thimbles.

I will repeat the information that was covered in *Thimbles of Australia*. I have included new colour bands found of the previously-published advertising thimbles.

The thimble output needed for the Australian market in the 1920s and 1930s would have been very small compared with those for Great Britain and the United States, so to me it is important to include any varieties that have cropped up in thimble collections since 1997.

Amongst the thimble collecting community and in reference books when the apex or top is coloured, they are referred to as glass tops, which are found on some aluminium thimbles. These are made from a type of plastic, either in a matching or a contrasting colour.



Now that I have all the Australian aluminium advertising thimbles assembled in one place, a pattern of the place of manufacture has emerged.

AUSTRIA (fewer than I expected) – AUSTRIA MAKE – BRITISH MADE – MADE IN ENGLAND – GERMANY – THIMBLE MADE IN GERMANY (rare) – MADE IN GERMANY (the most common) – GERMAN MAKE – MADE IN BAVARIA (rare) – USA – MADE IN USA

I can only offer the colour of the bands as presented to me – some colour may have worn off – some repainted – or even doctored (tho this would be rare).

I have also added Australian advertising **sewing kits and needlecases** – scroll down right to the end.

Some of the images or examples are of a poor quality.
Please help if you have clearer or different or additional images.

For other Australian thimble topics see
Australian advertising thimbles
Australian modern sterling silver thimble and sewing tools makers 1973-2014
Australia's Elfin thimbles
Sydney Opera House thimbles

Allowrie BUTTER

PAGE 68

The trademark for Allowrie was registered for milk and other dairy products on 3 December 1932 for the Producers' Co-operative Distributing Society Ltd of Sydney. Allowrie Butter is still being produced in Australia today, by Bonlac Foods Ltd 566 St Kilda Road in Melbourne.

The aluminium thimbles have a red, green or black band with the word 'Allowrie' in cursive lettering. The black band thimbles have 'Germany' in the indentations above the band. There is no coloured top to the thimbles.



GERMANY
(stamped into indentations)
black band



GERMANY
(stamped into indentations)
green band

no photo

red band



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Their advertising thimbles exist with three coloured bands: blue, dark blue and black. None of the examples have coloured tops. The thimbles with the dark blue band also have the wording 'Made in USA' stamped in the indentations above the band. Some of the A.M.P. thimbles have 'Made in Germany' lettered beneath the advertisement and the type of lettering is different. There are thimbles for this slogan with 'Made in England' in the apex, which indicates they were made by Charles Iles.

no photo black band	 MADE IN USA dark blue band
 MADE IN USA (lettered B&B S^T P in apex) <u>Brown & Bigelow – St Paul's Minnesota</u> blue band	 dark blue band
	 AMP building Launceston Tasmania 2019

AUNT MARY'S BAKING POWDER

NEW

This baking powder was produced by Tillock & Co Ltd in Sydney, during the 1920s and 1930s.

They have red bands and no glass apex. The place of manufacture is unusual
'Thimble Made in Germany' lettered in the indentations.



THIMBLE MADE IN GERMANY
(lettered on band above slogan)

red band



THIMBLE MADE IN GERMANY
(lettered on band above slogan)

red band



Tillock display at the Sydney Show in April 1921



BARRY & ROBERTS

NEW

Barry & Roberts was the first grocery store in Queensland, the precursor of modern supermarkets. The grocery section was accessed thru the Elizabeth Street entrance (ie basement) in the city of Brisbane.

The main department store entrance was in Queen Street. There were other, smaller stores in Edward Street and Stanley Street. The façade of the old main Brisbane building is today part of the city store of Myer at the upper end of the Queen Street Mall. The description on the invoices is cash grocers and there were suburban branches at Aspley, Kallangur, Lutwyche and the towns of Ipswich, Toowoomba and Rockhampton, with their bulk store at Enoggera; all in Queensland.

The store was established by Samuel Roberts and Thomas Joseph Barry in 1898. The main store was demolished in 1967, tho the business only closed in 1980.

The bands are dark green and there is no glass apex.



dark green band



original store, George Street Brisbane



Barry & Roberts façade, Queen Street Mall Brisbane today



Above: Barry and Roberts, Queen Street

image: The Royal Historical Society of Queensland

BATHO'S BAKING POWDER FOR WHITER SCONES

NEW

A clue was found in 2010 – that Batho's may have been an Australian-made product. Free jigsaws were offered in return for cash and coupons in 1933, as advertised in Queensland's *The Courier-Mail* on 28th

August of that year. The firm offering these free items as listed, were the manufacturers, Matthews, Thompson & Co Ltd, Newtown, Sydney, who asked for a two-penny stamp to cover postage. The products listed were all Australian-made products ie Grainus and Burnet's – both of whom produced thimbles and were earlier owned by Holsum Products in 1925, so it is possible that this product was in that basket of groceries.

The thimbles have a red band and there is no glass apex.
MADE IN GERMANY stamped into indentations.



MADE IN GERMANY
red band



BEBARFALD-BLUE BIRD OPP TOWN HALL
SEWING MACHINES SYDNEY
PAGE 68-70

Bebarfalds were a chain of furniture shops operating around Australia from the 1850s to 1960s. They became a full departmental store in Sydney in 1963, having been in operation since the 1850s. From 1922 onwards, amongst their range, they sold Blue Bird-Vickers treadle sewing machines that were imported from England. Special wooden sewing machine cabinets were commissioned by Bebarfalds in Sydney to house these sewing machines. The cabinet features two leadlight panels on the doors and there is a Blue Bird in the glass in each door. Blue Bird sewing machines were sold throughout Australia in these and similar plain wooden cabinets. Bebarfalds Corner in George Street, opposite the Town Hall, was a well-known meeting place for friends in Sydney.

Aluminium thimbles were struck for Bebarfalds' outlets in Sydney and Melbourne. These thimbles were given away between March 1927 and September 1940, according to the issues of *Australian Home Journal*, where advertisements for the Blue Bird-Vickers Sewing Machines had appeared since April 1922. The initial advert reads Free Blue Bird thimble to the first 20 coupons received. Later this was extended to the first forty coupons and the thimble giveaways then were described as having a patent top. This would mean that the thimbles with blue tops are later than those with plain tops.

'Bebarfald-Blue Bird Sewing Machine opp. Town Hall, Sydney' is lettered around the blue band, having either a blue glass or a plain apex. Some of the Sydney Blue Bird thimbles have 'British Made' inside the apex. Mottled green Bakelite tubular needle cases with 'Bebarfalds Ltd Opposite Town Hall George Street Sydney' were also produced as advertising material by Bebarfalds.

According to Michael Lech, writing about Bebarfald, the founder, Barnet Bebarfald, arrived from England in 1852. He finally settled in Sydney and in 1872 he sold new and second-hand furniture. The thimble lettering for this Sydney store is for the period 1894 to mid-1920s. According to Lech, Bebarfald have become best remembered for their sewing machines, which first appeared in 1917. By 1927 they were branded Blue Bird.

There is an interesting link between Bebarfald and Boan – each who had Australian advertising thimbles produced for their businesses. Bebarfald's son-in-law was Harry Boan who established Perth's largest department store, Boan Bros.



BRITISH MADE
(lettered in apex)
Charles Iles - Birmingham
dark blue band
dark blue glass top



MADE IN ENGLAND
(lettered in apex)
Charles Iles - Birmingham
blue band
blue glass top

BOAN BROS. PERTH

PAGE 70

Boan Bros. a chain of Western Australian department stores was started in 1895. The name changed in 1917 to Boans. The firm was taken over and renamed in 1988 by Myer and, as Myer, still operates as a departmental store, found across Australia.

The thimble bands have 'Boan Bros. Perth' lettered on what would have been dark blue or black bands with no coloured top and would date from before 1917 when the company name first changed. 'German Make'.

There is an interesting link between Boan and Bebarfald – each who had aluminium advertising thimbles produced for their businesses. Harry Boan who established Perth's largest department store, Boan Bros, was the son-in-law of Barnet Bebarfald, who sold the Blue Bird sewing machines in Sydney.

new colour no photo black band	 dark blue band
 Boan Bros Perth 1910s	

BOND'S HOSIERY

PAGE 70

Bond's of Camperdown New South Wales registered the trademark for hosiery and gloves on 5 January 1921.

Bond's celebrated its centenary in 2015, growing from its earliest days when George Bond started the company as an importer and distributor of hosiery. Bond's went on to produce socks and underwear, but advertising thimbles were only made for their hosiery.

The thimbles have a red band, yellow or blue band. The very dark blue banded thimble has 'Made in ...' lettered in the indentations above the slogan. None has a coloured top. The country of origin is Austria that is stamped into the indentations for the red-band thimbles.

new colour



yellow band



AUSTRIA

(stamped into indentations)

(black & white image)

red band

new colour

no photo

dark blue band



To SEE BETTER SEE MR.B.'

PAGE 70-71

Mr B the Optician was founded as a local optician in Perth in 1911 by Walter Buckeridge. Mr B the Optometrist still operate today (tho in September 1998 my letter to the firm was Returned to Sender) as optometrists and contact lens practitioners in Perth, Busselton and Dunsborough in Western Australia led by a fourth generation Buckeridge, John.
It is unusual to find that these aluminium thimbles have crossed the Nullarbor, into collections in the eastern states.

The band on these thimbles is blue and also found in yellow and there is a blue glass top with the advertising slogan reading 'To see better see Mr B' - surely most advanced marketing techniques for the time for a firm of opticians.

Examples exist with no glass top, where the thimbles are squatter than the usual aluminium thimbles made for the Australian market. There are maker's marks of 'B & B' for Brown and Bigelow with 'ST. P' (for St Paul Minnesota) in the USA, lettered up in the apex.

new images

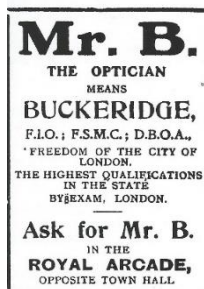


USA

(stamped B&B ST P in apex)

Brown & Bigelow – St Paul's Minnesota

dark blue band



The Boomerang June 1919

BURNET'S FRUIT EXTRACTS

NEW

The bands are red and there is no glass apex.



MADE IN GERMANY
(stamped into indentations)
red band



Burnet's Imitation Fruit Extract

BURNET'S JELLIES FOR PURITY AND FLAVOUR PAGE 71

Holsum Products Pty Ltd of Rocklea near Brisbane were the trademark holders for Burnet's for jelly crystals from 3 December 1925, so their aluminium thimbles would date from this date onwards.

The 'Burnet's Jellies for Purity and Flavour' thimbles have no coloured tops, and a red band with 'Made in Germany' is stamped into the indentations above the band.



MADE IN GERMANY
(stamped into indentations)
red band



Burnet's Jelly Crystals

BURNET'S JELLIES FOR PURITY
AND FLAVOR (different spelling)

NEW

no photo

MADE IN GERMANY
(stamped into indentations)
red band

Bushells BLUE Tea

LABEL

PAGE 71

Alfred T. Bushell first sold tea and coffee in Australia in Brisbane in 1883 and Bushells Tea is still a household name in Australia today. Bushells were vigorous advertisers - *Australian Home Journal* in the 1920s carried different advertisements for Bushells almost every month. According to Bryden (1981) Bushells Teas spent £39,455 in 1923 on having free half-pound packets of Bushells Tea delivered to every home in Sydney.

The trademark for the name Bushells was only taken out on 29 August 1935, by which time Bushells teas and coffees were household names. Bushells thimbles would have been found as giveaways in packets of tea. They would also have been exchanged for the labels from packets of Bushells Tea and this vigorous marketing may be the reason that Bushells advertising thimbles are the most widely held advertising thimbles in Australian collections today.

Bushells advertising thimbles were made in a variety of mediums: aluminium, Bakelite and brass and the variety of slogans on the aluminium thimbles reflects the variety of teas available.

At first glance the Bushells Tea aluminium thimbles appear to be all the same.

The most commonly found thimbles have 'Bushells Blue Label Tea' around a blue band with a blue glass top. These thimbles have 'Austrian Make' stamped into the indentations.

The thimbles with 'German Make' were made as the top of the sewing kits made for Bushells. One of these Bushells Blue Label Tea thimbles was offered for sale in *Thimble Society of London* in autumn 1988.



AUSTRIAN MAKE
(stamped into indentations)
blue band
blue glass top



GERMAN MAKE
(stamped into indentations)
dark blue band
blue glass top
these thimbles found as tops of Bushells' sewing kits



MADE IN ENGLAND
(lettered in apex)
Charles Iles – Birmingham
blue band
blue glass top

new colour



turquoise band

L: example from Groiss book on Settmacher p59



Mr Bushells Snr sipping tea was used as part of the Bushells label, registered in 1920



a plaque at The Rocks, Circular Quay, Sydney, commemorating Bushells Place 1904-1975

Bushells-TEA OF FLAVOUR

PAGE 72

The next most commonly found thimbles have lettered 'Bushells Tea of Flavour' on a blue band with a blue glass top. As can be seen in there are two shapes to these specific thimbles: one type has a smaller, more rounded apex.

The thimbles with this differently shaped apex have 'British Made' lettered up in the apex. With that lettering, these thimbles were probably made by Charles Iles of Birmingham. The others have no country of origin.



MADE IN ENGLAND
(lettered in apex)
Charles Iles - Birmingham
blue band
blue glass top



Bushells-TEA OF FLAVOR (different spelling)

PAGE 72

Less commonly found examples read 'Bushells Tea of Flavor' (the American spelling).

These have a blue band, but no glass top. They are taller thimbles than those previously mentioned and there is no rolled rim; some have the country of manufacture as Britain.



blue band
(b&w image)





old façade ...shells Tea – Tea of Flavor Hobart

Bushells - 1/3 Tea

PAGE 72

The following thimbles with "Bushells' 1/3 Tea" are different from all the other Australian aluminium thimbles. Instead of having the lettering in relief, the lettering is punched into the thimbles and the background has fine vertical ribbing without colour on the band and no coloured top.

Does the '1/3' convey one-third of a pound in weight or one shilling and thruppence?

A search of Bushells adverts of the 1920s and 1930s has revealed no clues.

There are no country origin marks.



no colour band
(b&w image)

CORNWALL'S MALT EXTRACT (different spelling of name)

NEW



MADE IN USA
(lettered in apex)
red band

CORNWELL'S MALT EXTRACT

PAGE 72

Cornwell's sauces have been made in Australia since the 1930s. On 4 October 1938 Mauri Bros & Thomson (Aust) Pty Ltd of Canberra registered the name of Cornwell's for their malt extract.

The thimbles have a plain top and the band is black, the thimbles have 'German Make' printed on the band as part of the slogan. Red banded examples exist, with the same lettering 'German Make' on the red band.

 GERMAN MAKE (stamped into indentations) black band	new colour  GERMAN MAKE (stamped into indentations) red band
	

E.B.C. for BOOTS

NEW

This small boot making firm existed in Westgarth, Victoria. The firm made boots for soldiers and the boot maker's great-niece, Ruth Parkin, owns this thimble. The firm's name was Exhibition Boot Company.

There are no further details on the band colours etc. We know they were in business in 1902 as there are reports of a fire at their premises.

no photo

WEAR EZYWALKIN BOOTS

PAGE 72

There are two advertising slogans for Ezywalkin. The first have 'Wear Ezywalkin Boots' with a yellow band (a rare colour in advertising thimbles). There is no coloured glass top. 'German Make' is lettered below the band.

Another has a pale grey band, no coloured apex. 'German Make' is stamped under the band.

new colour  GERMAN MAKE (lettered below the band) grey band	 GERMAN MAKE (lettered below the band) yellow band
 Ezywalkin Boots – Bendigo	

WEAR EZYWALKIN SHOES

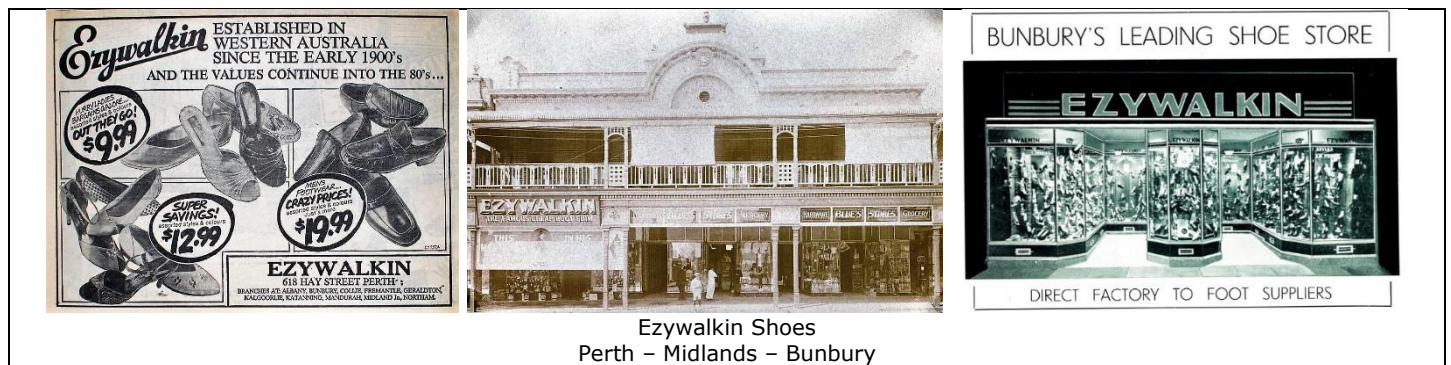
PAGE 72

Ezywalkin was first established in Boulder Western Australia in 1901, selling boots and shoes. They soon expanded into Perth and Fremantle, Bunbury and Collie. Ezywalkin (Retail) Pty Ltd registered the name of Ezywalkin on 19 December 1908 in Victoria. This shoe firm grew to have branches in Victoria and Adelaide and other towns in South Australia from the 1920s until the late 1980s, including Launceston and Hobart in Tasmania. Some stores still exist ie in Gawler SA.

They made their own shoes in four factories for the cheaper range, importing the more expensive shoes from the United States and Britain.

Isabel Foster of Melbourne, remembers being taken to the Glenhuntly branch in Melbourne for her school shoes – in 1927.

 GERMAN MAKE (stamped into indentations) red band red glass top
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Ezywalkin Shoes
Perth – Midlands – Bunbury

GRAINUS FOR BREAKFAST

PAGE 73

Grainus was an oats porridge and the trademark for Grainus was registered in November 1921 by Holsum Products Pty Ltd of Rocklea, near Brisbane. The thimbles were included within the boxes of oats.

Their advertising thimbles have a red band and no coloured top with 'Made in Germany' lettered within the indentations.



MADE IN GERMANY
(stamped into indentations)
red band

GRAINUS PORRIDGE FOOD

NEW



MADE IN GERMANY
(stamped into indentations)
unknown colour worn off

GRANNY SMITHS BAKING POWDER

NEW



MADE IN GERMANY
(stamped into indentations)
blue band worn off

EXCELLENT RESULTS
are always assured when mother
uses GRANNY SMITH'S BAKING
POWDER. Cakes, Scones and
Pastry made with it simply melt in
the mouth.

The Inverell Times 10 July 1927

THE GROSVENOR ADELAIDE

NEW

This is a hotel in Adelaide, South Australia (now known as The Mercure Grosvenor Hotel).

It is the only known advertising thimble for an Australian hotel. The hotel opened in 1930, which was the heyday of advertising thimbles.

The lettering is on a blue band with no glass apex.



blue band



hotel today

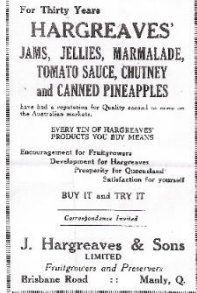
ASK FOR HARGREAVES FOR JAMS AND SAUCES

NEW

In 1892 Mr John Hargreaves moved from Breakfast Creek to Manly Road, where he purchased 320 acres, setting up a small jam factory in 1892 in Manly. That soon grew to become a thriving industry and the fruit used in the factory was grown in the surrounding areas. The ability to preserve the fruit fresh from the orchard was a unique and much desired position, ensuring the highest standard of produce every time.

Hargreaves were no longer making jams by 1958-1959 as they were then only registered in the trade directory under Sauces, Pickles Manufacturers. They traded as J Hargreaves and Sons of 585 Manly Road Manly until 1936. Brisbane had many of these small family jam factories operating in the suburbs from the 1920s-1980s, but this is the first one discovered who commissioned advertising thimbles (George Dean April 2009). Later Hargreaves became part of Edgells-Birds Eye in 1969. The factory closed in 1999.

The thimbles have either blue, red or black bands. The blue-banded thimbles have blue glass apices – the black bands have yellow glass apices – the red banded thimbles have blue glass apices.

	no photo MADE IN GERMANY (stamped into indentations) blue band blue glass top	
		
MADE IN GERMANY (stamped into indentations) black band yellow glass top		
	 1924 advertisement	 HARGREAVES AND SONS FRUITBROWERS AND PRES. Small thimble on base, 11 cm. high, 7 cm. diameter, clear glass. Borelli collection

MARCHANT'S COOL DRINKS

NEW

George Marchant (1857-1941) migrated from England to Brisbane in 1874. In 1886 he and his wife Mary bought a ginger beer factory – he had learnt about the business whilst he was a carter to an aerated waters factory. This new enterprise was in Bower Street, Spring Hill in Brisbane. His soft-drink business grew to be one of the largest in Australia with other plants in Sydney and Newcastle, Richmond in Melbourne and Adelaide. He patented a bottling machine, which sold internationally, and this led to his success. Drinks bearing his name today are marketed by Coco-Amatil – and that follows my theory that manufacturers who had advertising thimbles made in the 1920s and 30s, deserve to still be household names in Australia today.

There are blue green and red bands, none of which have coloured tops.

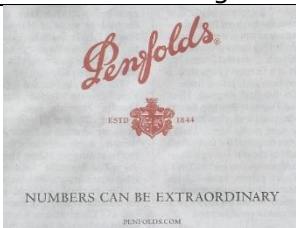
GERMAN MAKE (stamped into indentations) red – blue – green bands			
			
			
			
George Marchant			

PENFOLDS WINES

PAGE 73

Penfolds Wines was established in the Barossa Valley SA, in the 1860s by Dr Christopher and Mary Penfold. Penfolds is still flourishing wine makers today: makers of the famous Grange wines.

The bands are black and glass tops of yellow or black have been encountered with 'Germany' lettered into indentations. Red band and red glass tops and those with green with green glass tops, red bands with blue tops have recently been found.

 GERMANY (stamped into indentations) black band black glass apex	no photo GERMANY (stamped into indentations) black band yellow glass apex	
new colour  GERMANY (stamped into indentations) green band (colour worn off completely) green glass apex	new colour no photo GERMANY (stamped into indentations) red band blue glass apex	
new colour no photo GERMANY (stamped into indentations) red band red glass apex	new colour no photo GERMANY (stamped into indentations) red band yellow glass apex	
 2015 advertisement	 aluminium wine top	 Penfolds, Barossa Valley 2015

"USE PICK-ME-UP SAUCE"

PAGE 73

The first advertisement for Pick-Me-Up Sauce appeared in *Australian Home Journal* in March 1920 and the sauce still appears on supermarket shelves today under the Cornwell's label. It was advertised as Genuine Worcestershire Sauce made in Australia.

The thimbles have dark blue, red or green bands with no coloured tops and no marks of their origin.

no photo dark blue band	new colour  green band	
	 red band	
		

J.J.RAFFERTY CHEMIST ARMIDALE

PAGE 73

J.J. Rafferty was registered as a chemist and druggist in New South Wales in 1898 and operated well into the twentieth century in Armidale. It is most unusual to find thimbles made for a non-capital city in Australia.

No colour remains on the thimble bands on the examples sighted and no coloured tops.
'Made in Germany' is lettered below the advert.



MADE IN GERMANY
(lettered below the slogan)
unknown colour worn off
(b&w image)

PUBLIC NOTICE.
JOHN J. RAFFERTY & CO,
BEG to inform the Public of Armidale and surrounding district that they have opened their
Extensive Chemist & Druggist Establishment.
IN THOSE PREMISES, SITUATED IN BRADY-STREET, almost opposite Kichan's Imperial Hotel.
A Large and Specially Selected Stock of Drugs, Patent Medicines, and Druggist's Sundries.
The new firm trust that by strict attention to their business and moderate charges to merit a share of public support.
J. J. RAFFERTY & CO.,
CHEMISTS, DRUGGISTS, SURGICAL AND MECHANICAL DENTISTS,
BRADY-ST., ARMIDALE
NSW

The Armidale Chronicle
Wed 19 December 1894

SELECTA THOMSON BROS

NEW

The clue to this advertising thimble is the symbol of a sewing machine illustrated on the band. Selecta is the brand of sewing machines that were made in Germany. Thomson Bros were the sole Australian importers of these sewing machines and they were located at 59-61, George St West, Sydney New South Wales.

A sewing machine with this information lettered on the machine identifies this thimble with Australia.

The bands are two shades blue and they have blue glass apices; the red bands have matching red tops. They were lettered 'Made in Bavaria'.



MADE IN BAVARIA
(stamped into indentations)
blue band
blue glass top



MADE IN BAVARIA
(stamped into indentations)
dark blue band
dark blue glass top



MADE IN BAVARIA
(stamped into indentations)
red band
red glass top





THOMSON'S

WONDERFUL

SELECTA

Sewing Machines

WONDERFUL SELECTAS, SEW BOTH WAYS.
WONDERFUL SELECTAS, light running and speedy.
WONDERFUL SELECTAS, Machines taken in exchange.
WONDERFUL SELECTAS, guaranteed for 10 years.
WONDERFUL SELECTAS, from 6/15/-, or easy terms.
Delivered Free any Railway Station or Port.
Head Office : 59 George - Street West, near Fire Station.
Branches : 155 Oxford - st between Crown and Bourke sts.
and 226 King -st, Newtown, (opp. Hordern - st).
100 other Machines, all makes from 1/-.
I Employ No Travellers. Customers save 5/- in the pound.

Woman's Budget 1913

SILVAFROS FOR STOVES & IRONWORK

PAGE 73-74

Silvafros was the trademark taken out by Taubmans Industries of Mary Street St Peters in Sydney on 23 June 1921 for their paint products. The first advertisement appeared shortly afterwards, in September 1921. Silvafros was a frosted silver enamel used to repaint kitchen wood stoves. Though Silvafros was advertised extensively in *Australian Home Journal* in the early 1920s, no mention of these thimbles was made.

The thimbles sighted had no band colour remaining. As they were advertising a silver product, maybe they never have had any colour? There are now examples with black painted bands. They have no colour tops and no place of manufacture.



black band

L: thimbles damaged where the apex has been removed

R: b&w image



Australian Home Journal July 1923

MAKE IT WITH "Sparva"

NEW

This British-made dress fabric was widely available in Australia in the 1930s and in an article in August 1939 for Grace Bros, Broadway in Sydney, there is a photograph of sales staff modelling frocks made of Sparva.

In an advertisement in *The Canberra Times* on 9 December 1938 it mentions A thimble with every dress length was advertised by J B Young's Kingston store. Maybe this accounts for the plethora of these thimbles found in Australia?

A British advertisement is included for comparison.

There are several versions and all have glass apices – the red bands have red tops – the black bands have yellow apices and similarly the blue bands have blue apices and the green bands have green apices.



BRITISH MADE
(lettered in apex)
Charles Iles - Birmingham
red band
red glass top



MADE IN ENGLAND
(lettered in apex)
Charles Iles - Birmingham
red band
red glass top



BRITISH MADE
(lettered in apex)
Charles Iles - Birmingham
black band
yellow glass top



MADE IN ENGLAND
(lettered in apex)
Charles Iles - Birmingham
black band
yellow glass top

no photo

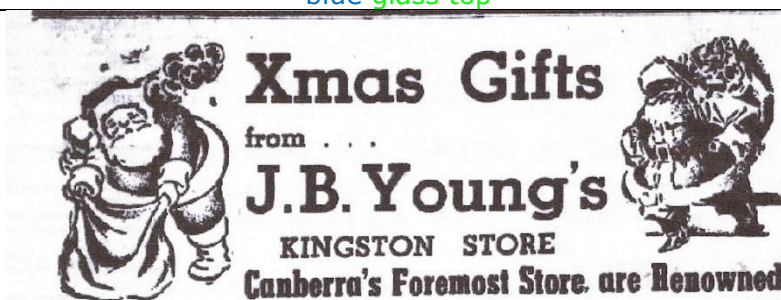
MADE IN ENGLAND
(lettered in apex)
Charles Iles - Birmingham
blue band
blue glass top

no photo

BRITISH MADE
(lettered in apex)
Charles Iles - Birmingham
green band
green glass top



AUSTRIA MAKE
blue band
blue glass top



ASK TO SEE THE FULL RANGE.

There are several imitations of "Sparva." Look for the name on the selvage. It is your guarantee of good service.

PATTERNS to suit all TASTES.

A LARGE range—for all colour-fancies; safe to launder; prices to thrill every home dressmaker—these are the striking features of "SPARVA." Pretty clothes in abundance for both Ladies and Children. Also "SPARVA" is ideal for Casement Curtains.

"Sparva" REGD.
Taffeta de Luxe

SOLD by Drapers and Storekeepers everywhere. If any difficulty, write for Shade Card and name of nearest retailer to SPARVA, Ltd., "Sparva" House, 5, Abchurch Lane, LONDON, E.C. 4, MANCHESTER.

COLOUR-FAST IN WASH, LIGHT, SEA OR SUN

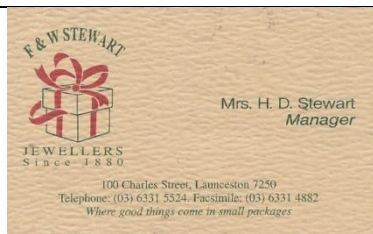
36 inches wide

PLAIN PRINTED

1/4 1/3

16 1/2

Page | 29 of 40



business card where family are still involved in the jewellers
still using a facsimile number



Yellow Pages advertisement
showing a mobile phone number and email contacts

Brass advertising thimbles

Brass advertising thimbles are much rarer than aluminium ones, so it is not surprising to only find only a few examples of brass advertising thimbles with an Australian product advertised.

Bushells RICH Tea

PAGE 75

'German Make' is stamped into the indentations and there are no other maker's marks. Some examples have been painted red after they were produced – these are not as they were produced in Germany – just a later addition.



GRIFFITHS' TEAS

NEW

A lesser-known brand of Australian tea is also advertised on brass thimbles. The band is maroon-red and the wording is Griffiths' Teas. The thimbles have no rims and no other marks.

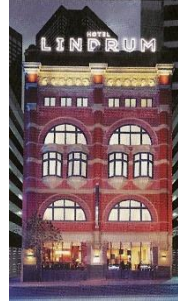
The tea was produced in Ceylon and packaged for Griffiths Brothers Ltd of 16 Goodwood Street, Richmond, Victoria. The company was founded in 1879 and they were one of the first tea and coffee distributors in Australia.

There is a 122-year old heritage Romanesque-revival building, constructed when the tea merchants Griffiths Brothers commissioned it as a store and sales room. This is on 26 Flinders Street in Melbourne and the building still exists as the Hotel Lindrum (2022).

The Sydney Griffiths Teas warehouse still stands in Surry Hills. It was built in 1915 and today is a heritage-listed refurbished block of units in inner city Sydney. The Griffiths Tea name on two sides is lettered in white bricks on the building.

Griffiths Brothers only registered their trademark in January 1960, but the shape and design of these thimbles would pre-date that time by at least thirty years.

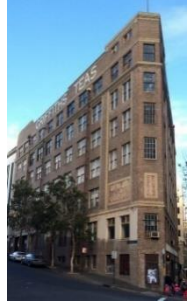




L: Griffiths Brothers Teas Coffees
126 Flinders Street Melbourne

R: Griffith Teas building repurposed into Lindrum
Hotel

R photo: Australian Traveller Feb-Mar 2009



Griffiths Teas building Surry Hills Sydney

Plastic advertising thimbles

Bakelite

Bakelite was the trade name of the General Bakelite Company and Leo H. Baekeland patented this early plastic manufacture in the USA in 1909. Thimbles of Bakelite were produced roughly between 1914 and the 1950s. It is unusual to find Australian advertisements on Bakelite thimbles.

Bushells, BLUE LABEL TEA

PAGE 96

Bushells Tea had these advertising thimbles made of Bakelite in the 1920s to complement their range of aluminium and brass advertising thimbles. These thimbles are of distinctive dark blue Bakelite and have lettering for 'Bushells Blue Label Tea' in white around the band. These are the only Bakelite thimbles of this dark blue colour so it was presumably commissioned exclusively for their tea? There are no marks of origin on the thimbles.

Unlike their aluminium counterparts, these Bushells thimbles were produced in different sizes. The size marks are lettered in the apex.

Very few examples still exist today of these Bushells Tea thimbles, that leads one to presume that only a few (100) were ordered - maybe as giveaways to more important clients?



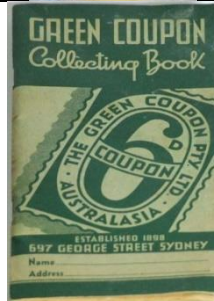
Xylonite

The British Xylonite Company of Hale End in North London first created xylonite in 1877.
Their thimbles were lettered HALEX from 1897.

COLLECT GREEN COUPONS

NEW

These customer loyalty paper coupons were introduced into Australasia in 1941.
The coupons were produced at 697 George Street Sydney.
They were established in 1898.



GREEN COUPON *Collecting Book*
60mm

ORCHARD'S WATCHES

PAGE 97

There are cream coloured xylonite thimbles that advertise Orchard's Watches of Sydney. R. B. Orchard the watchmaker, situated on the corner of King and Pitt Streets, was the forerunner of Prouds, the longstanding Sydney jewellers.

Orchards' slogan in the 1920s was a catchy 'Orchards where the best watches grow'.

The thimbles are completely plain, with the lettering 'Orchard's Watches' around the band. There are no other markings.



ORCHARD'S SYDNEY



*Orchards Ltd
Railway Square
Sydney*

AUSTRALIAN ADVERTISING SEWING TOOLS

SEWING KITS

Bushells BLUE Tea

LABEL

PAGE 100

As well as thimbles, Bushells commissioned aluminium advertising sewing kits. These tubular kits have an aluminium thimble as the lid. The thimbles have 'Bushells Blue Label Tea' lettered around a blue band, with 'German Make' stamped into the indentations and a blue glass top. An 'Austrian Make' thimble will not fit these German made sewing kits. The thimble lifts off to reveal a wooden needlecase/thread winder inside. The base of the sewing tube has a motif of a horseshoe enclosing a four-leaf clover.

Queensland students visiting Melbourne on school tours in the early 1930s were given these kits as a free gift.



GERMAN MAKE
(stamped into indentations)

dark blue band

blue glass top

maker's mark appears on the base

'Austrian Make' thimbles do not fit these German sewing kits

E. & S. C.W.S Tea

NEW

In a very similar shape to the La Perla sewing kits, these brass and lacquer kits advertise 'E. & S C.W.S. Tea'. This co-operative was vital to the welfare in Australia during the Depression in the 1930s.

The blue lacquered tubular kits contain a wooden thread winder and needlecase and the brass thimble forms the top of the kit. 'Foreign' is lettered on the band of the thimble.



GRAMP'S/ORLANDO

PAGE 100

These sewing kits that advertise South Australia's Gramp's Orlando Wines and Ports, are in the shape of a wine bottle and made of brass.

The thimble forms the flat base of the kit and there is a thread holder with a needle case inside and a pencil fits in the neck of the bottle. The kits were made in Germany.

NEW image



'ORLANDO Gold Label Port'

NEW image



contents: wooden thread winder, brass thimble which forms the base of the sewing kit, with a pencil forming the top or cap



'GRAMP'S ORLANDO Wines'



poster



advertisement '100 years better Orlando Wines' on Whale Museum wall, in Victor Harbour, South Australia



Gramp's wine label

GREATER NEWCASTLE PERMANENT

PAGE 100

These sewing kits are modern and used as advertising giveaways. The red or blue plastic kits are rectangular and all a uniform colour. The thimbles are rectangular in shape and fit into the end of the kits. The kits contain a cotton winder with a needleholder housed in the centre.

The lettering is gilt on black with 'Compliments of Greater Newcastle Permanent'.

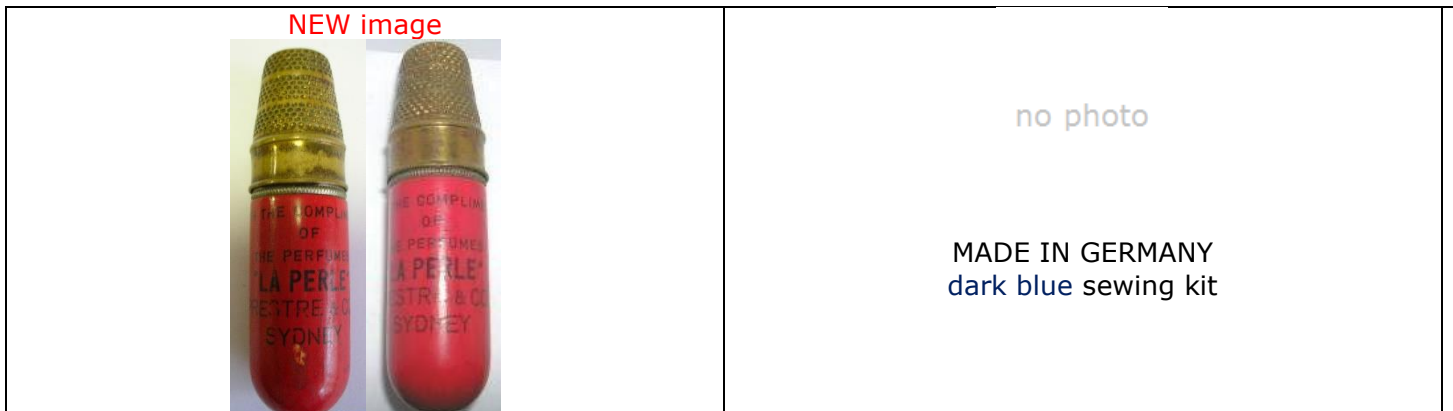


"LA PERLE" PERFUMES

PAGE 101

Metal kits in the form of a tube exist advertising La Perle Perfumes. The brass thimbles form the top of the sewing kits and the contents are a cotton winder-needleholder. The red metal tubular body is lettered 'With the Compliments of the Perfumes "La Perle" Perfume Prestre & Co Sydney'.

There are no maker's marks on the kits to identify where they were made. A second kit has turned up – in blue rather than red and it is lettered with 'Made in Germany'.



NEEDLECASES etc

BEARFALD'S LTD
OPPOSITE TOWN HALL
GEORGE ST SYDNEY
NEW



original Bakelite needlecase in mottled blue and cream



same image just enhancing the lettering

T.C. BEIRNE & CO L^{TD}
BRISBANE
IPSWICH
& MACKAY
NEW



mitrailleuse

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Contributors

Lee Bateman | Clarice & David Birch | Sue Caesar | Sue Christensen | Dorothy Collins | George Dean | Helen Dooley
Isabel Foster | Pat Gray | Margaret Hendriksen | Nicola Kissane | Margaret McMullen | Ruth Parkin | Lee Perry
Norma Shattock | John Tanner | Brenda van Niekerk | Sue Wilson | Sandra Woodyard | Esme Zalkin

This listing of Australian Advertising thimbles and sewing kits 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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