

A manual for dating Australian Girl Guide and Brownie Promise Badges, 1910-2008

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This chart attempts to document the changes in Guiding and pre-Guiding Promise (AKA Tenderfoot) badges from 1908 to the present. By necessity, it also includes the earliest British badges, as these designs show the evolution of the design through a period when badges are most likely to have been made in the UK and imported for the earliest Guide Companies ('Units' today) in Australia. A version charting badges of the Ranger and Lones sections will become available as soon as enough images are available.

Attempts are made to make a clear demarcation between examples taken from collections in the UK, and examples known to exist in Australia. Research to date shows that Guide badges proper (as opposed to locally-made badges for local groups like Girl Aids and Girl Peace Scouts) were most likely *not* to have been manufactured in Australia before around 1920-21. However, with groups calling themselves Girl Guides existing in Australia from as early as 1910, imports into states like Victoria are quite likely. Anyone finding examples of the earliest badges (eg the British BP-GG Promise badge of 1910-1918) with Australian makers marks is encouraged to contact the author, with photographs front and back, on ggnsuniformarchive@gmail.com so that amendments can be made.

Pre-Guiding Promise badges

Organisation	Image	Description
Australian League of Girl Aids (ALGA)/Florence Nightingale Girl Aids (FNGA)		Dates: July 1909-1915 (Amalgamated with Red Cross VAD in 1915) Found: Originated in NSW. Also QLD (ALGA), VIC (FNGA) Detail: 2x2cm? Badge was a bronze map of Australia, marked with state boundaries, and the words "Be Ready" either across the map, or in some descriptions, with the wording on a scroll underneath.¹
Girl Peace Scouts		Dates: 1908 (New Zealand Foundation), 1909 (TAS & VIC) -19?? Found: NZ, TAS, VIC Detail: Badge was a cut brass Fleur-de-lis, individually hand-engraved with detail. "Scoutmistresses" received the full badge of a Fleur-de-lis surrounded by laurel branches, with the motto "Be Always Ready" on a ribbon across the base. Later versions appear to have been cast.²
Girl Scouts	 (Conjecture)	Dates: 1909-1926? Found: VIC, NSW (Other states possible) – Regional areas. Detail: Badge appears to have been taken from the regular Scout organisation. <i>Cadets & Scouts of Australia</i> (based in Melbourne) issued this line drawing in December 1909. It is different from UK Badges for its engraved detail.

¹ All documentation relating to the ALGA/FNGA comes from newspapers. No evidence of the organisation is held in NSW Guiding archives, or in the Mitchell Library. Coin dealers and militaria collectors have reported several versions of this badge ranging from brass to silver and gold, with or without scrolls and also

² Images courtesy of the collections of Darryl Bretheron and Ross Blayney of the NZ Badgers Club.

Standard badges (Guide Section and Adult “Regulars”)

NB: All of these badges except the 1915 were available in silver. Sterling Silver was used until the 1960s. Silver was used for Commissioners.

Years	Image	Description
1909- 23 rd May 1910		Only one extant example of this badge is known, at Girlguiding Foxlease Training Centre in the New Forest, UK. It is a cardboard-backed embroidered armband displaying the monogrammed initials “BPGG”, and measuring approximately 7.5cm x 8.5cm in size. The embroidery is in either an old gold or a faded blue on khaki cotton twill background. Girl Guides were named by Lord Baden-Powell sometime in August 1909. A letter from Sir Percy W Everett, answered in B-P’s own handwriting on 25th August that year, asks whether Girl Guides is to be the new name for Girl Scouts, and this is affirmed. Letters in August still refer to them as Girl Scouts. This places the naming of Girl Guides before the Crystal Palace Rally of September 4th 1909, even though the <i>Scheme for Girl Guides</i> would not be released to the public until 8th November.
1910-1914		Known as the “BP-GG Type” Tenderfoot (Promise) Badge, the original badge of the Girl Guides Association in Britain was registered by Agnes Baden-Powell (President) on 23 May 1910, and marked with the Registration number 563052. Very Art Nouveau in style, the design curves and flows continuously from one section to next. Whether any of these badges were purchased and imported for Girl Guides in Australia is not known. Examples held in Australian State collections are from significant women who had been Guiding in the UK in the early 1910s. It is also possible that badges were made locally (See example below), but no examples of this specific type are known.

1915-? Australia		The only known Australian-made promise badge of the BP-GG type was produced and used by the Girl Guides of Clare in South Australia in 1915, based on the 1914-17 UK badge with very utilitarian wartime style of a flat back and raised edge. Local newspaper reports of the time explain that they were made and sold as a fundraiser to purchase a kitchen truck to be sent to the Front in France and help with the war effort. The existence of this project was known and reported upon in Britain in two issues of <i>The Girl Guides' Gazette</i>, and a gold one was given to Lord Baden-Powell to be presented to his sister, Guiding Founder Agnes Baden-Powell in that year. Agnes wore it for the rest of her life. This example was sold on eBay, and its present whereabouts are unknown.
1918 UK		Only British marked examples of this badge are known in Australia in the hands of private collectors, not State Organisations (NSW surveyed only – more research required), and may have been imported for use by Australian Guides. The design has shifted back towards a more Nouveau style, with dips and curves, which are nevertheless more simplified and restrained than those before the First World War. It is also possible that this design was made using the sand-casting method, rather than the lost wax process used before the war.
1919-1922 UK		Only British marked examples of this badge are known in Australia in the hands of private collectors, not State Organisations (NSW surveyed only – more research required), and may have been imported for use by Australian Guides. It is this version of the UK badge which the earliest NSW/Australian-issue badges were based on in terms of shape, but it is still more “upright” in form than the Australian version.

1921-1924 Australia		The first commonly-used badge in the NSW & ACT State Collection. The badge features a blank scroll on the base of the stem, a gently curved stem, and a star in place of the letters “BP” in the top leaf of the trefoil. The earliest versions of this badge feature the star punched out of the leaf without a raised edge around it. The design is British, but the mould distinctly Australian, being slightly elongated horizontally, with rounded “teardrop” leaves rather than the “squared” top and sides of the British models. Maker’s Mark: AMOR SYDNEY (back of scroll or centre back).	
1924-1932 Australia		Second 1920s design with a blank scroll and a rim around the star. NSW version features same horizontally-stretched trefoil style as the previous mould. QLD version (pictured) is closer to the British version, but the only example yet known to feature the “GG” in a serif typeface. All others (all periods) use a sans typeface. Maker’s Marks: AMOR SYDNEY, Wallace Bishop Makers Brisbane.	

1932-1934		Addition of lettering to the scroll under the stem. This version of the badge is made from the same AMOR SYDNEY master badge as the 1921 version. The difference is that the master scroll was cut back at this date to incorporate the lettering. The scroll has a raised edge top and bottom Maker's Marks: SYDNEY (On back of scroll. Made by Amor)	
1934-1944		Shift to a more upright design in line with the UK badges of the 1920s and early 1930s. The leaves of these badges are more squared off on the outer edges than the previous design or the UK versions.  There is a raised rim around the star, the scroll has no raised edge top and bottom, and the stem is curved elegantly, ending in a botanically-correct "cutting" above the scroll. Maker's Marks: STOKES, STOKES MELB (various forms and back textures)	
1944-1946		The mold is remade with an almost-triangular, stylized stem, known as the "stumpy" among collectors. This design is uniquely Australian and does not appear anywhere else in the Commonwealth where charts show that badges often followed the same basic design of a trefoil with star, scroll, and the lettering "GG". The rim returns to the top and bottom edge of the scroll in this version as well. Maker's Marks: STOKES? More often appears with no mark at all on the back.	

1946- c1950		Known to collectors as the “Ugly”, a new mould appears to have been made for Australia at the end of WWII. Featuring a far sharper lines and edges, it returns to a highly utilitarian wartime feel, but attempting a more modernist edge, the lines of the Trefoil failing to flow or connect from vein and leaf to stem and scroll as previous designs had done. The stem has become a diagonal slash, though some of the edges are still softer than those of its successor. This does not appear anywhere else in the world. Maker’s Marks: None.
C1955- 1960		The Mark II “Ugly” attempted to sharpen and modernise the lines of the Trefoil even further than the version issued around 1946. Picking up on a 1950s trend for the crisp and flat, the edges of this Trefoil are sharp and uncomfortable, emphasising the slash of the stem and a disconnect between the stem and the vein which fails to lead the eye from one part of the design to the next. The result was probably the least attractive design in a century. This style of badge was the first to receive modern synthetic (rather than glass) “enamel” treatments for the various Ranger sections (see below), the results of which are often garish and far from resistant to surface wear and discolouration. The single advantage was that the colour was less likely to fall out than some baked glass enamels had done. Maker’s Marks: AJ Parkes
C1961- 1964		The early 1960s brought a return to a curvy design and the “stumpy stem” style of Australian badge. This version is heavier set, with more bulbous curves and deeper edges than those of the early 1940s. The back of this badge is very distinctive too, with a hammered look to the back. The maker’s marks are cut off by the sides of the stem. Maker’s Marks: AJ Parkes. Parxite 77’



1964-1974		The finest of the “stumpy stem” badges, this design is more upright in appearance, with a narrow stem and fine trim and lettering. The maker’s mark on the back is far more distinctive, with the lettering above and below the pin. The texture on the back is a broader ripple. Maker’s Marks: AJ Parkes, Parxite 77’		
1975-1979		The end of the 1970s brought an early experiment with a coated finish that didn’t require polishing. Using Angus & Coote’s 1961-patented coating method, these badges do not survive in good condition.³ They were often mistakenly polished on the advice of older leaders trained to polish every week. Even untouched, the coating became patchy over time, and those areas uncovered corroded to a dark brown. Only one run was done. The back texture is hatched patches. Maker’s Marks: “Angus & Coote. PAT NO: 250388”		
1979-1985		In 1978, Guides of all ages were invited to vote for a new design of Promise badge especially for Australia. Brownie Helen Brinsmead remembers feeling important at being allowed to help choose, and excited when they received their new badges with a boomerang and ‘AUSTRALIA’ in place of the scroll for Guides when she flew up the next year. The first versions of these badges returned to needing a weekly polish, and can be identified by the ‘sunburst’ or ray pattern radiating from the stem in the background. The full name “GIRL GUIDES” also now appeared on the badge. Maker’s Marks: BERTRAM (usually, but occasionally no mark). Smooth back.		
1985-1991		Around 1985, the design changed again when Girl Guides Australia returned to AJ Parkes as the manufacturer. Still requiring a regular polish, the mould removed the sunburst from the background. This is most likely because the design had been difficult to clean. The boomerang is slightly larger in this design. Maker’s Marks: AJ Parkes (under the pin mount).		

³ Patent number 250388 found on IP Australia. <http://pericles.ipaustralia.gov.au/ols/auspat/applicationDetails.do?applicationNo=1961000323> “Improvements in medallions and the like and associated attachments”.

1991-1997		1991 saw a return to a no-polish version of the badge. Research would be needed to establish whether this was for convenience, or to reduce the cost of the badge as bronze was becoming more expensive. No modern badges have required polishing since this date. Maker's Marks: AJ Parkes (under the pin mount). Stippled back texture.	
1997-2007		1997 saw the introduction of a new national logo for the corporate identity of Guides Australia, and the first time that members of all ages wore the same badge. Section names such as Brownies and Rangers ceased, and were all called simply "Guides". The decision was made to match the corporate logo to the Promise badge for the first time. The seven-pointed Federal star of Australia replaced the five-pointed star of the Guide Law, to show unity of state and territory Guiding organisations. The first version of this badge had a clutch-back (perpendicular stick pin with a round clutch clasp), which contemporary members say was not popular because it kept getting lost. The second run (date uncertain) returned to a folding pin back, but with a roll-catch to secure it. The arc to the left of the flames which form the stem has the word "GUIDES" on it. To the right is "AUSTRALIA". Maker's Mark: Cash's	
2008-Present		Guides Australia formally changed its corporate identity back to "Girl Guides Australia" in 2008, due to public confusion over the name since 1991. The Promise badge design fell into line by removing the word "Guides" from the left of the flame-stem to the trefoil, allowing the trefoil itself to speak for the name of the organisation. More recent versions of the badge have a very slightly more curved surface, brighter blue, and slightly less-defined star. Both photos were taken from the same angle to show the curvature. Place badges side by side for comparison. Maker's Mark: Cash's	

Brownie Badges, 1917-1998

The references to Brownies in Australia first appear in March 1917 in Adelaide. They appear in Queensland by November 1919. Victoria tried to get them up in 1920 but they didn't get going until 1921. Western Australia, Tasmania and New South Wales introduced them in turn by the end of 1921.

This chart assumes that the British Brownie badge model was followed until 1920. Thereafter, we have extant Brownie promise badges from 1925 onwards. It also is not complete, as the author does not have photographs of all the styles seen.

Years	Image	Description
1914		British: Not known to have been worn in Australia, this is the badge for the Rosebuds, an early precursor to Brownies formed in 1914. The littlest Guides didn't like the name, and so the name was quickly shifted to Acorns the following year. There is a reference to Rosebuds in Bunbury WA in December 1916, so there may have been imports.⁴ Two versions of varying quality appear to have been made, even in the short period Rosebuds were around. Without pictures of makers marks, it is difficult to ascertain whether these were made by different manufacturers. (Photos from unknown private collections) Maker's Marks: unknown.



⁴<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/160275394?searchTerm=%2B%22girl%20guide%22%20%20%2Brosebud%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20&searchLimits=l-availability=y||l-australian=y||l-decade=191||l-year=1916>

1915-1917		British: Acorns replaced Rosebuds quite swiftly in 1915 with a clearer badge system for younger Guides aged 8-10, and a patrol or “six” system based around trees. The badges were enamelled discs, designed to be stitched on the uniform above the left pocket. From this “Entrance” badge, these discs became more complex in design, and larger in size, until an Acorn reached First Class and presumably ‘grew into an oak’. Badge designs were registered in the UK design registries on 23rd December 1915, with original drawings now residing at the National Archives, Kew. The registration number is 653377. Extant examples known at Foxlease. This is the same month that Brownies were announced as the replacement for Acorns or Rosebuds, and the badge continued until at least the end of 1917 as the badge of the Brownies.⁵ Tree emblems were replaced by spirit emblems in June 1917. No reference to Acorns in Australia has turned up on Trove. Maker’s Marks: unknown.	
Apr 1918 - Aug 1919		British: Brownies were launched formally in 1915, and by January 1918, a cloth version of the “Recruit badge” became available. This may have been a response to complaints about the cost of enamelled badges for the Acorns, or of shifting once again to a new system, but it is not specified in the issues of <i>The Girl Guides’ Gazette</i>. Metal versions (below) appear to have been available concurrently, and several issues of <i>The Girl Guides’ Gazette</i> devote notes to positioning this badge, as well as imploring Brown Owls to ensure that only one badge was worn in either the cloth or metal version, “<i>not both</i>”!	

⁵ Records in design registries now held at National Archives, Kew, UK. *The Girl Guides’ Gazette* December 1916 lays out the program for Brownies, as well as badges and uniforms. “Entrance”, Second and First Class badges cost 2d, 3d and 4d apiece and appear in the inside cover catalogue into 1917.

1917-1919		British: A metal version of the pin became available almost simultaneously, and was the same price as the cloth version. This explains why the cloth emblem was only available for a short period from around January 1918 to August 1919. Instructions changed almost monthly, though the pin was to be worn holding the “loose ends of the tie” like the Guide trefoil. This mould differs quite a bit in features from the later designs, having a full hood which sits up around the shoulders rather than a turned-back cap and collar shown in the later versions. None known with Australian provenance. Maker’s Mark: None.	
1918-1921?		British: The second version of the Brownie badge with the “long pin back” or “safety-pin back” as collectors describe these, resembles the familiar Brownie bar badge far more closely. The Brownie has a clearly defined face, a pointed cap with turned-back edge, and a three-banded collar quite distinct from the original hooded version, though the stance remains the same. Versions of this badge might have made it to Australia, as Brownie units began to appear in South Australia from March 1917 and popped up independently in different states thereafter. No known examples exist with Australian provenance. Maker’s Mark: Not known.	

1922?		British made: This may be one of the first badges to have been used in Australia for Brownies. It belonged to an unnamed colleague of Guide Captains Marion Sinclair and Frieda Barfus who had been a Brown Owl in VIC during the 1920s. It is notable for the use of a Brownie as a separate, cast figure to the folded bronze bar, which has been held in place by two split pins which are cast into the back of the little man. It is the earliest example found so far with a registration number on the back. There may be another version of this badge with the long safety pin on the back, as the figure appears designed for that, but the face is far less detailed than the preceding mould, and the raised arm is oddly foreshortened. All Brownie badges examined by this author contain an error in the Registration number. This does not match any record near it in the books and boxes held by the British National Archives at Kew. Further research is required. Maker's Mark: None. Erroneous Reg No: 689495 (c.March 1922)	
1921-1932 AU		The first Brownie badge to be made in Australia, the bar has square ends and is integrated with the figure of the Brownie himself. British examples of this period have rounded ends to the bar. The hook is soldered in place, as is the swivel-point for the pin. As it is made in Australia, the registration number has disappeared. Maker's Mark: AMOR SYDNEY	

1933-1944	Not available (very similar to above)	Maker's Mark: Stokes Known to exist because the author has seen them. Essentially the same as others, slightly different catch and Brownie figure. Logically fits in to this date range as the manufacturer was making other badges at the time.	
1939-1945		Probably the best made design in fifty years of the Brownie bar badge, this version has the Brownie wearing a clearly marked leotard and leggings (or boots?). There is a seam line at the groin and around the ankles. There are three bands of collar at the back, and two at the front of the body. The face is not as clearly defined and appears more 'pinched' than others. The badge is very solid however, because the front is made in one folded and bent piece, which forms the pin swivel at one end and the catch at the other. Most probably WWII due to metal-saving carving out of the back of the Brownie. Can be simply repaired by replacing the pin with bent bronze wire. Maker's Mark: BERTRAM MELB	
1944-1955		A badly-damaged example, bent and scratched, However this fits the Australian WWII and postwar years because it doesn't have a maker's mark. May have been made concurrently with the Bertram model. The pin bar and catch (which folds over the sharp end) are soldered in place. Maker's Mark: None	

1955-1967		Distinctive for its very thin, straight bar with sharply-squared ends, and for an early roll-catch, this Brownie is very 1950s with fine ankles, strong muscles, and the most defined face. Also has three very distinct bands in the collar all the way around. Mysteriously, the mould was made with a stump for the right, raised hand. Maker's Mark: AJ Parkes, All States (split either end of the pin).	
1968-1979		Known as the "Skeleton Trefoil" or "Wireframe Brownie" badge, this design was introduced in Australia as well as in the UK, when the 8-Point Award System of badges revolutionized Guiding in 1968. There are three known moulds for this badge, with varying levels of distinction in the face and bellybutton. So far it has not been possible to put these in chronological order, although the belly button may become more distinct and the collar and face less so over time. Catches are all the same. Slight variations in pin may be due to repair. Maker's Marks: None.	 

1979-1985		In 1978, all sections of Guiding voted to select a new, uniquely Australian version of the Promise badge, and a boomerang was added to the bottom of all versions. The old wireframe badge was filled in with a sunburst pattern to match Bertram's version of the badge of older Guides and Leaders, and 'AUSTRALIA' was put across the boomerang. Maker's Mark: BERTRAM (behind the boomerang)	
1985-1990		1985 brought a new maker and a new mould. This version of the badge has the most clearly defined sunburst in a sharp concertina fold for the backdrop. The Brownie's face looks quite distinctly angry. This badge still needed to be polished by hand, so this particular badge looked terrible when it filled up with brasso. Maker's Mark: none	
1991-1998		1991 brought a return to AJ Parkes as manufacturers, and the first version of the badge which didn't require polishing. The background is smoother, like the corresponding Guide badge, but still has a hint of the sunburst. In 1997, the decision was made to drop the names of the separate sections, and call all members "Guides." This was the last badge made especially for younger members of Guiding in Australia. Maker's Mark: AJ Parkes ('Australian Made' above the pin)	

Badges of Other sections – a Brief Note.

Different badges were available for the following sections of Guiding, and providing the section was in operation, can be assumed to exist in the same format as the dates above, but with appropriate enamel:

Land Rangers 1922-1974: red enamel

Sea Rangers: 1920-1974: royal blue enamel

Air Rangers 1946-1974: sky blue enamel

“Combined” Rangers (1968/70-1985): yellow enamel

Ranger Guides (1978-1985): yellow enamel **(1985-1997)** red enamel

Rangers (1985-1997): Red Enamel and a bar marked “RANGER”

Extension Guides (1910s-1950s): Lilac or green enamel.

Local Association: Silver trefoil marked “LA” in the centre.

Lones (1920s-1997): Plain bronze “L” for Guides and Brownies. Enamelled “L” on Bronze for Ranger sections to 1950s. Metal “L” and enamelled ground from 1950s to 1997