
DISPLAY STANDS, MERCHANDISING, AND ADVERTISING

HOW TO SELL A NEEDLEWORK TOOL

- **Presentation to Needlework Tool Collectors Society of Australia**
- **Susan Webster, July, 2022**

I have been interested in this topic for some years, but not too much is written about it. So I am sharing what little I know.

In fact, I have not included any material on merchandising or advertising but preparing for this talk has helped me to think my way through the whole topic, so I may be able to talk more in future.

Not all my display cases are here today – some are not very interesting.

And they are all bulky.

Some of the images illustrating this talk are taken from the internet – again, I couldn't find a lot of material even there.

EARLY DISPLAY CASE – W HALL & CO



W. Hall & Co's Needles, Knitting Pins and Crochet Hooks date about 1860 or 1870, based on the fact that brands for knitting needles only appeared in pattern books – called recipe books – in the 1850s.

The firm's name well displayed. W. Hall & Co was a manufacturer in the mid-19th century of "needles, pins, and fish hooks of all kinds". Knitting needles and crochet hooks too, of course. The firm were also firm believers in marketing and merchandising, which is why there is still so many remnants of their activity, in particular a bell-shaped KN gauge.

UN-BRANDED CASE FOR HABERDASHERY



Unbranded general haberdashery case, with labelled drawers for all kinds often-used items, found by Jan Harris earlier this year in her regional Victorian rambles.

Jan has photos of this case here today. My query is, was this case made in Australia or the Australian colonies, or overseas.

MILWARDS SEWING NEEDLES CASE

(PHOTO SHOWS BACK OF CASE)

1900S ?

Photo shows back of
case, thus upside
down plaque on
cover
1900s ?



I believe that these quality wooden cases were created up to about 1920s. This case has a high quality finish and is made of veneered hardwood. The drawer opening from the back is to allow the retailer to easily re-stock the bottom shelf of the display.

MERRICKS SIX CORD

SPOOL CABINET



This and the next slide show cases produced for Merrick's – published by Nicci on our closed Facebook page last month – photos taken from the internet, I believe.

Again, high quality finish and overall treatment.

MERRICK'S SPOOL CABINET



These Merrick's cases are the first US cases – the first slides show English cases (assuming Jan's case is English).

BOYE ROTARY CASE FOR SEWING MACHINE SUPPLIES



1920s - <https://www.madeinchicagomuseum.com/single-post/boye-needle-company/>

In 1906, the Boye Needle Company of Chicago presented this large rotary case for locating on the counter top or wall-mounted. It brought together several models of machine sewing needle to service a larger variety of sewing machines. (The creator of this rotary case had realised that the 100 or so models of sewing machine actually used only about 12 different styles of needle.) It seems to have been a revolution in merchandising.

It was used not in a haberdashery shop / wool shop but in a sewing machine show room.

Exhibited in the Made in Chicago Museum

"The public knows that where this Case is found, the well-known High Grade 'Boye' Needles, Shuttles and Bobbins can be secured." —*Boye Needle Co. advertisement, 1909*

BOYE AD FOR HAND SEWING NEEDLES SOLD IN A CASE @ 5 CENTS



Boye Needle Co was incorporated in Chicago in 1906, although I believe the company existed for many years earlier.

It became the largest manufacturer and seller of needles in the USA (as best as I can determine).

By 1917 it was making crochet hooks and knitting needles in the USA. Previously, it had imported needles from the UK.

BOYE AGAIN - SEWING NEEDLE CASE



Here's Boye again, with a case to display sewing needles. Again, a nice-looking wooden case, so perhaps 1920s?

DORCAS DISPLAY CASE – THIMBLES 1920S ?



We are moving further into the 1920s – I think.

Again, Nicci has published this display stand for Dorcas thimbles on our Facebook page. Made of Bakelite. Here today.

Thimbles are not Dorcas

MILWARD'S DISC – 1920-30S



Definitely a Deco-aire about these next items.

Another display case from Milward's, this one for their famous Disc brand which was sold in Australia for a while.

Note that the wood used was much flimsier – lighter weight, paint replacing polish.

Internet photo

ABEL MORRELL'S AERO WITH CROSS FOX EMBLEM

NO EARLIER THAN 1932



More UK deco – definitely the 1930s as Abel Morrell launched the Aero brand of grey aluminium coated needles in 1932. They were revolutionary for their light-weight aluminium shafts.

Soon many, many brands of needles and unbranded needles too used the grey coated aluminium shafts

Note the Cross Fox emblem at the top of the display case, a carry over from 19th century brands which were taken over by Abel Morrell.

Internet photo

BOYE KNITTING NEEDLE STAND



Shows precision point. Note Boye includes three US cities on this case, moving on from the original Chicago base.

Boye and rival Susan Bates conducted a long-running competition about which firm had the best crochet hook display.

Internet image, so hasn't blown up well.

JASON DISPLAY STAND



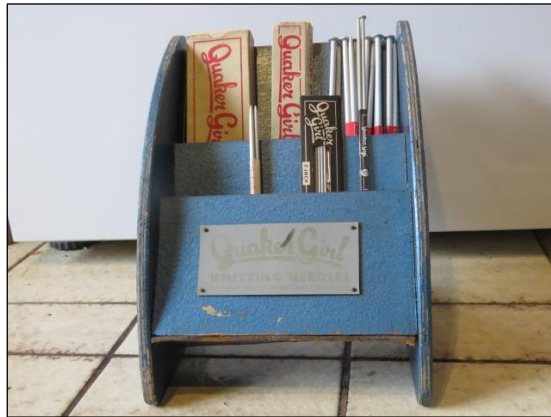
CC 981

I think we are moving into the 1940s here.

This is a cardboard open-out case, must smaller (and presumably cheaper) than the earlier wooden cases.

Bought this from Tasmania in 2007 for AUD17.98.

QUAKER GIRL DISPLAY STAND



Quaker Girl display stand – 1930s-1940s?

Quaker Girl was the metal-shafted brand of the big UK firm Wimberdar.

Again, this is painted composition.

SUSAN BATES CROCHET HOOK STAND



Definitely post WWII here, because C.J. Bates only launched the Susan Bates brand in 1942. So maybe this crochet hook display stand dates to 1950s?? Note the brag about the shape of the hook (refer rivalry with Boye)

BOYE AGAIN



Boye again here, perhaps 1960s? Note the lightweight metal stand which can be used free standing on a counter top or attached to a vertical structure.

SUSAN BATES AGAIN



This nicely varnished and painted case is fairly recent, with the use of wooden replacing metal and plastic for a vintage quality “craft” look.

COATS SUPERSHEEN

THREAD SPOOLS



Spools of thread.

Originally a British firm – perhaps Karen Kearney could give a more precise date – but very big in all handcrafts in UK, North America and Australia.

Here today and also published by Nicci on our Facebook page.

GLAMOR DISPLAY STAND

"MADE IN GREAT BRITAIN"

1970 ?



I think this is the youngest display stand here today.

I can find ABSOLUTELY NOTHING about this UK brand. But I estimate to 1970s on the style of the logo.