

QUEEN VICTORIA MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY

CHS 61

THOMAS EDGAR BURNS COLLECTION

Botanists, Launceston

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INTRODUCTION

Thomas Edgar Burns, born on 16 September 1904 at Launceston, was educated at the Invermay Primary School and Launceston High School. After receiving the Tasmanian Teachers Certificate from the Phillip Smith College, he taught at a number of schools in northern Tasmania before teaching at Invermay Primary, Glen Dhu Primary and Launceston Technical High School. When the Launceston Teachers College opened, he transferred there and lectured in biology until his retirement in 1969. Later he taught botany part-time at the Tasmanian College of Advanced Education. On several occasions he conducted courses on botany and plant identification for the Adult Education Board.

After he was appointed Honorary Associate in Botany at the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery in 1960 he acted as curator, reorganising the collection and adding many specimens. The same year he was appointed Honorary Research Associate in Botany by the University of Tasmania. A keen collector of Tasmanian native plants, he sent many specimens to the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew in England and collected for Lord Talbot de Malahide.

A life member of the Royal Society of Tasmania, he was chairman and secretary for a number of years. He was also a life member of the Launceston Field Naturalists and editor of their newsletter for some years.

With H J King he was the author of *Wildflowers of Tasmania*, first published in 1969. This handy pocket-size guide book ran into a number of editions. Mr Burns and J R Skemp were co-authors of *Van Diemen's Land correspondents* (1961) and he edited J R Skemp's *My birds* (1971). A grand master of the Masonic Lodge, he compiled a history of St Andrew's Lodge. Also involved with the Boy Scout movement, he was awarded an OAM for service to the community in 1983.

T E Burns died on 11 June 1983 at Launceston.

The records were previously stored in the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery Botany Department.

1. T E Burns Correspondence

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|-----|--|--------------------|
| 1/1 | Correspondence to T E Burns from Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, England, 1958-1962, 1965, 1966, 1968-1972, 1976 | 1958-1976 |
| 1/2 | Correspondence to T E Burns from Department of Botany, University of Delhi, India | 1960-1962 |
| 1/3 | Correspondence to T E Burns from L I Cady, NSW; A K Cameron, Victoria re R C Gunn; Winifred Curtis, Hobart; CSIRO; C Martin, George Town; Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery; Royal Society of Tasmania; Janet Somerville, Botany Department, University of Tasmania; University of Sydney; University of Tasmania; Morris Miller Library, University of Tasmania; J H Willis, Royal Botanic Gardens, National Herbarium, Melbourne | 1960-1978 |
| 1/4 | Correspondence from T E Burns to Australian Dictionary of Biography; Archives Office of Tasmania; A K Cameron, Victoria; to J Lewis from Mr Burns in Israel; Royal Society of Tasmania; J H Willis, National Herbarium, Melbourne | 1965,
1974-1979 |

2. Miscellaneous Correspondence

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|-----|---|--------------------|
| 2/1 | Correspondence to Miss Lodder, from Alex. Morton, Hobart, 30 March 1886, 11 May 1886 | 1886 |
| 2/2 | Correspondence to Mr Morton, from Richard A Bastow, Hobart, 29 March 1886 | 1886 |
| 2/3 | Correspondence, typed by T E Burns?, to C C Lawrence, Cormiston Road, Tenalga, from Winifred Curtis, Hobart; J H Willis, Melbourne Botanic Gardens and National Herbarium | 1952-1953,
1960 |
| 2/4 | Correspondence, typed by T E Burns?, from C C Lawrence to Winifred Curtis, Hobart; J H Willis, National Herbarium, Melbourne | 1952, 1960 |
| 2/5 | Correspondence to Director, Queen Victoria Museum, from State Herbarium of S.A. | 1958 |
| 2/6 | Correspondence to R H Green, Queen Victoria Museum, from J H Willis, Royal Botanic Gardens and National Herbarium, Melbourne | 1964 |
| 2/7 | Correspondence to Jack ?, from Ron Green, Hobart, 7 January 1973, 15 January 1973, re D H Weymouth (included is page from Royal Insurance calendar for 1913 which was found among Weymouth Collection | 1973 |

of Mosses (note by T E Burns, 1972))

3. Miscellaneous Items

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| 3/1 | 'Ramblings amongst the wildflowers of Tasmania', no.4, <i>Examiner</i> cutting, 29 August 1889, no. 22, 3 January 1891; 'The flora of Ulverstone', <i>Coastal News</i> cutting 29 November 1890 | 1889-1891 |
| 3/2 | Pen and ink diagram of <i>C. carnea</i> from Flinders Island | 1946 |
| 3/3 | <i>Orchids for all</i> , catalogue of Launceston Field Naturalists Club photograph evening, 4 March 1952 | 1952 |
| 3/4 | 'He solved the riddle of the petrified tree', <i>Examiner</i> cutting, 26 October 1954 re petrified tree now in front garden of QVMAG, Royal Park | 1954 |
| 3/5 | 'Australian orchids that were first collected in Tasmania', list prepared by J H Willis | 1965 |
| 3/6 | Malahide Collection, Lord Talbot's Herbarium 1972 (typed list of specimens) | 1972 |
| 3/7 | 'Royal Society excursions held since 1954' (list of excursions 1954-1963, 1973); typed copy of Royal Society minutes, 1862 | 1973 |
| 3/8 | Launceston Field Naturalists Club, miscellaneous correspondence, papers, notes by Mr Burns etc (includes 'Tour of Mt Barrow forest areas') | c1974 |
| 3/9 | Launceston Teachers Centre, correspondence, history source material (typed notes compiled by Mr Burns on various Tasmanian history topics) etc | 1975 |
| 3/10 | 'Key to Tasmanian berries' by Raleigh A Black (typed list) | nd |
| 3/11 | T E Burns' notebooks: botanical notebook; notebook with references to gold discoveries in Tasmania etc; notebook with references to Ronald Campbell Gunn etc; notebook with references to various nineteenth century expeditions in Tasmania | nd |

4. Photographs

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| 4/1 | Robert Brown, first white man to see Cataract Gorge 1803 (copy) | |
| 4/2 | Ronald Campbell Gunn, photograph of painting held at Kew, England | |

- 4/3 Gustav Weindorfer (copy, with label from cover sheets of Weindorfer Collection)
- 4/4 Rev. H M R Rupp (copy)
- 4/5 Florence Perrin (copy)
- 4/6 Janet Somerville outside QVMAG (colour photograph, 2 copies) 1959
- 4/7 Mr & Mrs H J King (colour photograph)
- 4/8 'Fly Agaric', 170 by 210 mm hand coloured photograph by H J King 1942

5. Watercolours

- 5/1 [Wildflowers] by Florence Greig **Framed painting**
Oversize item
- 5/2 *Hewardia tasmanica*, by Herbert John King **Framed painting**
Oversize item
- 5/3 Tasmanian flora, by H J King **Framed painting**
Oversize item
- 5/4 [Christmas bells] by H J King **Framed painting**
Oversize item

OTHER SOURCES

QVMAG, Community History, QVM 3