

QUEEN VICTORIA MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY

CHS 67

INDEPENDENT ORDER OF RECHABITES TASMANIA DISTRICT No. 79 COLLECTION

Friendly Societies, Launceston

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INTRODUCTION

The Independent Order of Rechabites (I.O.R.), commenced in Salford, Manchester, in 1835, was established in Tasmania in 1843. The name of the Order had Biblical connotations, being taken from the Rechabites, who were commanded 'not to drink wine' and directed to 'live in tents'. The Order was composed of districts and the branches called 'tents'.

The objects of the society were to spread the principles of total abstinence and to raise funds for sick pay, funeral allowances and medical attention for members.

The Society commenced in Launceston in 1843 when the Star of Tasmania Tent was formed. Early meetings were held in the Wycliffe Hall in Vincent Street, Launceston. Later tent meetings changed their venue to the York Street Temperance Hall, owned by the Tasmanian Teetotal Society. In 1894 a 99 years lease of the property at a peppercorn rental was secured and a lodge room and office were erected together with a new front to the building. Following an act of parliament in 1903, the property was vested in the trustees of the Tasmanian District of the I.O.R.. (1) The Rechabite Chambers were demolished in 1957 (2) and a new building, with shops, offices, a lodge room and car parking in the basement, constructed by the Society on the site of its previous building at 109 York Street, was first occupied in April 1958.

In 1955 the Independent Order of Rechabites, Olive Branch Tent took over the Star of Tasmania Tent. The number of members had declined due to the Commonwealth Government's introduction of health benefit schemes after the Second World War.

The Australian Government Actuary, in an investigation in 1974, reported that membership of the Society was declining rapidly. The return from the 109 York Street property was unsatisfactory and the Actuary recommended its disposal.

The Independent Order of Rechabites, Star of Tasmania & Olive Branch Tent, became financially unviable and was wound up on 30 June 1981.

The collection was donated to the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery in December 2002, with additional items donated in March 2003.

References:

1. A B Cartledge, *Independent Order of Rechabites, Tasmania District, no.79: centenary celebrations 1835-1935*, Launceston, 1935
2. *Examiner* 1 August 1957

1. Legal Records

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|-----|--|------|
| 1/1 | <i>Independent Order of Rechabites, Salford Unity, Temperance Friendly Society. District ritual, Manchester, 1888</i> | 1888 |
| 1/2 | <i>General laws for the government of the Independent Order of Rechabites. Salford Unity Friendly Society. Tasmania District, Launceston, 1941, two copies</i> | 1941 |
| 1/3 | I.O.R. Tasmania District no.79, proposed amendment to the rules, typed | nd |
| 1/4 | I.O.R. Friendly Societies Act 1888. Application to register a partial amendment of rules, 20 May 1976 | 1976 |

2. Correspondence

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|-----|--|-----------|
| 2/1 | Correspondence from I. O R., Launceston, 6/3/1963 to Brother R J Young, Launceston; 13/11/1975 to Australian Government Actuary; correspondence to I. O. R., 5/2/1970 from I. O. R., Adelaide; 22/9/1970 from Ansvr Insurance Co. Ltd agent; nd from Australian Government Actuary; 23/10/1975 from Australian Government Actuary; 10, 13, 15/12/1980 to and from G L B Brumby | 1963-1975 |
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4. Membership Records

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|-----|--------------------------------------|------|
| 4/1 | I.O.R. membership lists, handwritten | 1974 |
| 4/2 | Contribution Book | 1859 |

5. Death Certificates

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| 5/1.1 | Death certificates for I.O.R. members | 1961-1965 |
| 5/1.2 | Death certificates for I.O.R. members | 1971-1976 |

6. Miscellaneous Items

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|-----|---|--------|
| 6/1 | I.O.R. Tasmania District no.79, certificate of registration for Mrs Batten for funeral benefit | 1908 |
| 6/3 | <i>New I.O.R. headquarters, 109 York Street, Launceston: Independent Order of Rechabites, Tasmania District, no.79, Universal Abstainers Friendly Society, Launceston, [1958]</i> | [1958] |
| 6/4 | <i>Independent Order of Rechabites, Victoria District no.82: constitution, Melbourne, 1972</i> | 1972 |

6/5	Australian Government Actuary, <i>Friendly Society valuations: data specifications</i> , [Canberra], 1974	1974
6/6	Australian Government Actuary, <i>Tasmanian District Independent Order of Rechabites: investigation as at 30 June 1974</i> , [Canberra] 1974	1974
6/7	I.O.R. notice to members re increased benefits to members; notice re medical fund; Salvation Army Temperance essay advertising card	nd
6/8	Independent Order of Rechabites. S U Manchester, rubber stamp	nd

7.Publications

7/1	I.O. R. Queensland District no.87, <i>1872-1972 centenary souvenir</i> , Brisbane, 1972	1972
7/2	<i>Alcohol: the inside story</i> , supplement to <i>Alert</i> magazine	1973
7/3	<i>Rechabite Magazine</i> , Manchester, September 1977	1977
7/4	<i>The Rechabite and Temperance News</i> (Victoria) June, July, October	1977
7/5	<i>The N.S.W. Rechabite</i> , October, November	1977
7/6	K G Greet, <i>The debate about drink</i> , Manchester	nd
7/7	M K Harry, <i>Australian birds and animals colouring book</i> , Launceston Women's Christian Temperance Union with help from the I.O.R.	nd
7/8	M K Harry, <i>Colouring book</i> no.1, Melbourne, Women's Christian Temperance Union of Australia	nd
7/9	M K Harry, <i>Colouring book</i> no.2, Melbourne, Women's Christian Temperance Union of Australia	nd

8.Minutes

8/1	Independent Order of Rechabites, minutes of Board of Management, 23 March 1957-5 December 1981	1957-1981
8/2	Independent Order of Rechabites, minutes of Trustees meetings, 24 November 1967-25 October 1980	1967-1980

OTHER SOURCES

QVMAG, Community History, QVM.1998.MS.0077

Launceston Library manuscript collection, Independent Order of Rechabites. Star of Tasmania Tent records, 1892-1901 (LMSS 065)

Launceston Library manuscript collection, Independent Order of Rechabites. Olive Branch Tent records, 1942-1982 (LMSS 064)

Australian encyclopaedia vol.iv, Sydney, 1962, pp.217-219

A B Cartledge, *Independent Order of Rechabites, Tasmanian District no.79: centenary celebrations 1835-1935*, Launceston, 1935 (copy held in Launceston Library)