

CURTIS, Dr Winifred

D.Sc., Lond., Reader in Botany, Author of Flora of the Flowering Plants of Tasmania

- 009 Came to Tasmania in 1939, instead of Vancouver or N.Z. which were also possibilities for selection on the basis of climate.
- 030 Botany Dept staffing in 1939. Temporary appointment as part-time Demonstrator (and research student). 1945 appointed fulltime as Assistant lecturer in Biology and then in Botany. Botany separated as subject from Zoology in 1945.
- 060 Collecting materials for Botany classes in the bush - then to herbarium. Collection of zoological material devolved on Professor Hickman himself for many years - e.g. collecting starfish early in the morning from the Derwent. It was good fun - senior people took their own practical classes in those days. Collecting seaweed.
- 100 A small department, but growing. An exciting, improvising time at the university.
- 115 Hours worked: 9-6 daily, preparation in evening, collecting at weekends. 2 weeks annual leave, plus Easter and days between Christmas and New Year.
- 125 Part-time teaching also at Fahan School for three years. Fahan was evacuated during war to Interlaken (!) which involved much commuting.
- 135 No political involvement (see 260 et seq., however)
- 140 Professor ^{Hickman} an ideal Head of department
- 145 Sabbatical leave regarded as possibility by arrangement with Council, without pay; ~~but~~ later, with pay, but impossible to take because of staff shortage. In 1950 Dr C. taught 1st and 3rd year subjects during first part of year in order to take study leave in second part of year.
- 180 Description of starting work on Flora in 1945. Rodway's earlier work was out of print: need for revision or new book. Colleague Gordon left for chair in N.Z., leaving Dr C. to continue work.
- 200 Effect of smallness and isolation of the university. Royal Society library very valuable. No new periodicals available. Began to feel isolation after the war - mature students in particular needed to be reassured regarding standards. London pass degree equivalent standard. After Professor Barber came, more staff and beginning of Honours work.
- 240 Did not apply, or consider applying, for chair at that stage.
- 245 Only fulltime woman member of staff when appointed; gradually there came to be five. Until 1948 there was one salary scale for men and women. In 1948 women's salaries were cut to nine-tenths of men's: "the only time I became really roused out of botanising". See her letters (in large manila envelope accompanying). The Biology department however was a particularly happy one. 1951 saw new scale with no differentiation in salary. However, cost-of-living adjustments still disadvantaged women. 1955 Royal Commission brought university of Tasmania salary scales for men and women together, as were all others universities. No other kinds of discrimination however.

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- 340 No participation in Orr affair - regarded it as not her business
- 355 Eminent students in Botany Department - no particular response, but general commendation
- 370 Shortage of staff after war necessitated classes in duplicate and sometimes triplicate
A typical day's workload and timetable.
- 410 Expansion of department. Jobs for Heads of a department would have been advertised worldwide, but not certain about lower grades. Excitement of being involved with a small but growing institution.
- 450 Colombo students - need to get Brahmins (?) to eat protein in Tasmanian climate; and teaching one how to eat an egg.
- 470 Finishing her work on the Endemic Flora and the Students' Flora

Dr Curtis: good-looking, charming, courteous, scholarly, in English tradition of bluestocking. Humour combined with considerable firmness, and single-mindedness about her work.