Entry type: Person
Entry ID: PR00238

Thomson, Estelle

(1894 - 1953)

Born	18940101, Glasgow Scotland
Died	19530906, Brisbane Queensland Australia
Occupation	Artist, Author, Naturalist

Summary

Estelle Thomson was a member of the Queensland Naturalists' Club, contributing flowers, paintings and drawings to the club's annual wildflower show. She published *Flowers of Our Bush (*1929), a guide to Queensland wildflowers, which described and illustrated coastal species. From 1929 to the 1930s Estelle ran a weekly 'Wildflowers' column in the *Brisbane Courier*, illustrated by her own line drawings. This was followed by her column 'Nature's Ways' in the *Telegraph* which she maintained until 1950.

Additionally, Thomson lectured at women's clubs and schools, illustrating her lectures with delicately hand-coloured lantern slides. During the 1940s Estelle gave a series of children's talks on wildflowers on the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and produced a series of paintings of poisonous plants for the University of Queensland's Medical School. She deposited specimens in the Queensland Herbarium, including some collected on the Granite Belt and at Caloundra. Estelle was also an expert on Queensland birds.

Details

Estelle Thomson was the daughter of George Comrie-Smith, photographer and artist, and Ethel, nee Thomson. Both her parents were keen naturalists. Estelle's early love of nature was inspired by family visits to the Scottish Highlands and the Lakes District of Cumberland. She was educated at Calder House School at Seascale, Cumberland, and later at a school of physical culture at Dartford, Kent. Estelle was a teacher of physical culture and eurhythmics before her marriage in Glasgow in 1917 to her second cousin, the Queensland surveying engineer Aubrey Frederick Thomson (formerly von Stieglitz), then serving with the Australian Army in Europe during the First World War.

In 1919 Estelle and Aubrey Thomson arrived in Brisbane, later to be followed by her parents. They settled on a farm, Wombo, at Eight Mile Plains south of Brisbane, where they raised poultry and small crops until forced to abandon the venture in 1923. The then unspoilt bush of Eight Mile Plains made a lasting impression on Estelle and she became an active member of the Queensland Naturalists' Club from the 1920s. Estelle was vice-president in 1929-30 and president in 1930-31. She was to spend the rest of her life awakening public appreciation of Australian wildflowers, while also raising her four children.

Published resources

Book
Brilliant Careers - Women collectors and illustrators in Queensland, McKay, Judith, 1997

Flowers of Our Bush: with an introduction by C. T. White, Thomson, Estelle, 1929

Resource
Early Days of Brisbane Lyceum, Mittelheuser, Dr Cathryn AM, 2006,
http://www.lyceumbrisbane.org.au/History.htm

Lyceum Club Brisbane Incorporated, Lyceum Club Brisbane Incorporated, 2006,
http://www.lyceumbrisbane.org.au/

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

John Oxley Library, Manuscripts and Business Records Collection
R 1694 Lyceum Club Brisbane Inc Records

TR 2080 Lyceum Club Brisbane Inc. Records 1998-2000

R 1453 Lyceum Club Brisbane Inc. Records

R 1229 Lyceum Club Brisbane Inc. Newsletter

R 1600 Lyceum Club Brisbane Inc Records 1995-1996??R 1600 Lyceum Club Brisbane Inc Records 1995-1996??R 1600 Lyceum Club Brisbane Inc Records 1995-1996

R 1218 Lyceum Club Brisbane Inc. Records 1931-1994; 2013

6602 Estelle Thomson's Lantern Slides

Author Details
Lee Butterworth

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