

Catalogue of the papers and correspondence of

**ERIC HENRY STONELEY BURHOP FRS**

(1911 - 1980)

Compiled by Peter Harper and Timothy E. Powell

Deposited in the Library, University College,  
London

NCUACS 40/2/93

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THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON HISTORICAL MANUSCRIPTS

Report on the correspondence and papers

of

ERIC HENRY STONELEY BURHOP

(1911-1980)

physicist

in University College Library, London

Reproduced for the National Cataloguing Unit for

the Archives of Contemporary Scientists

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under the guidance of the Royal Society's National Committee for the History of Science, Medicine and Technology

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**LIST OF CONTENTS**

	<b>Items</b>	<b>Page</b>
GENERAL INTRODUCTION		3
SECTION A    BIOGRAPHICAL	A.1-A.35	5
SECTION B    PUGWASH CONFERENCES ON SCIENCE AND WORLD AFFAIRS	B.1-B.14	9
INDEX OF CORRESPONDENTS		11

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

### PROVENANCE

The papers were received in March 1993 from Dr Brenda Swann.

### OUTLINE OF THE CAREER OF E.H.S. BURHOP

Eric Henry Stoneley Burhop was born at Hobart, Tasmania in 1911. His parents were Salvation Army officers in poor financial circumstances who made considerable sacrifices to enable him to attend Ballarat and Melbourne High Schools, and enter Melbourne University as an engineering student in 1928. After one year he changed over to science, specialising in physics. In 1929 he was awarded the Aitchison Bursary which provided financial assistance for the rest of his undergraduate studies. He graduated with first class honours in physics in 1931 and then took an M.Sc. in the subject working with T.H. Laby. In 1933 an Exhibition of 1851 Overseas Scholarship took him to the Cavendish Laboratory, Cambridge where he carried out experimental research in nuclear physics working under Rutherford. After two years he returned to Melbourne to take up the post of Research Physicist and Lecturer in the University. During the Second World War he undertook war-related research at Melbourne and Sydney until May 1944 when he joined the British team working on the atomic energy project in the USA. He worked on isotope separation in the group led by H.S.W. Massey. In 1945 Burhop accepted a post of Lecturer in the Department of Mathematics at University College, London (Reader 1949). In 1950 he transferred to the Physics Department as Reader in Physics and in 1960 became Professor of Physics by conferment of title. He researched widely in atomic and nuclear physics including the Auger effect and electronic and ionic impact phenomena. He was a founder member of the European K meson collaboration and played a leading role in the UCL Bubble Chamber group. Burhop was elected FRS in 1963.

Burhop was strongly committed to the political left and sought a rapprochement between the Soviet bloc and the West during the Cold War. To this end he was actively involved in the work of the World Federation of Scientific Workers, of which he was President for many years. Burhop played an important role with Bertrand Russell, C.F. Powell and J. Rotblat in the organisation of the first Pugwash Conference on Science and World Affairs which met in July 1957 at Pugwash, Nova Scotia. Financed by the American industrialist Cyrus Eaton who was born at Pugwash, the conference brought together senior scientists from East and West to discuss the dangers of nuclear war, and provided the model for a series of similarly organised Pugwash conferences on this and related topics. Burhop was awarded the Joliot-Curie Medal of the World Peace Council in 1966 and the Lenin International Peace Prize in 1972.

For a full account of the life and career of Burhop see the memoir by H.S.W. Massey and D.H. Davis, *Biographical Memoirs of Fellows of the Royal Society*, 27, 1981.

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

This small collection contains interesting biographical material relating to Burhop's interest in furthering rapprochement between East and West, and documentation of the first Pugwash conference. There are no records of his scientific research or scientific correspondence.

Section A, Biographical, contains records of the 'passport case' when the Foreign Office withdrew Burhop's passport on the eve of a visit to the Soviet Union in 1951 and the award of the Lenin Peace Prize in 1972. There is also correspondence on the possible nomination of Bertrand Russell for the World Peace Council's International Peace Prize in 1957.

Section B, Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs, relates principally to the first conference in July 1957. The material includes documentation of the role of the World Federation of Scientific Workers in the organisation of the first conference, and manuscript notes of the proceedings.

There is also an index of correspondents.

P. Harper  
T.E. Powell  
BATH 1993

**SECTION A                      BIOGRAPHICAL                      A.1-A.35**

A.1                      Application for Chair of Physics, University of Adelaide, 1948.

A.2                      Appointment as University Reader in Physics, University College, London, 1950.

Press-cuttings only.

Conferment of title of Professor of Physics in the University of London, in respect of post at University College, 1960.

Letters of congratulation, press-cuttings.

A.3-A.17                      Passport Case                      1951-1962

Burhop planned to visit the USSR in July 1951 as a member of a scientific delegation organised by the Society for Cultural Relations between the Peoples of the British Commonwealth and the USSR (SCR). Shortly before his departure the Foreign Office cancelled his passport. In a parliamentary written reply this action was justified by the argument that it was 'in the national interest to discourage atomic scientists who had at any time had access to classified information from going to Russia'. Burhop had worked on the atomic energy project in the USA from May 1944 to October 1945 but subsequently had no connection with the atomic energy project and no access to classified information in the field. In August 1951 Burhop was issued with a new passport in return for assurances that he would not proceed to the USSR or to any countries regarded as within the Soviet orbit at any time without prior consultation with the Foreign Office. Burhop continued to advise the Foreign Office of his plans to visit Eastern Europe until 1962 when he was released from his undertaking.

Press reporting of the cancellation of Burhop's passport led to libel actions against the press in Britain and Australia. Burhop's solicitor was Arnold (later Lord) Goodman.

Documentation includes correspondence with scientific colleagues, politicians, journalists, trade unionists and ordinary members of the public concerned at the cancellation of Burhop's passport and his treatment by the press, and correspondence with his solicitor in respect of representations to Foreign Office and the libel actions.

A.3                      1951 June.

A.4                      1951 July.

A.5                      1951 August (1).



### Biographical

- A.6 1951 August (2).
- A.7 1951 September, October.
- A.8 'Opinion' in respect of 'Dr Burhop v. Australian Associated Press', 27 November 1951.
- A.9 1952 January-May.  
  
Includes 'Statement of claim' in respect of 'E.H.S. Burhop Plaintiff and Australian Associated Press Proprietary Limited Defendants', February and 'Defence' in respect of 'E.H.S. Burhop and the "Daily Telegraph" Limited', 21 March.
- A.10 1952 June-December.  
  
Includes 'Notice to admit facts' in respect of 'E.H.S. Burhop and The "Daily Telegraph" Limited', 6 June.
- A.11 1953 January-June.  
  
Includes documents returned to Burhop in March: 'Facts concerning cancellation of passport of Dr E.H.S. Burhop ...', copies of correspondence with Foreign Office July, August 1951, and 'At home to the press', Burhop's account of his treatment by the press after the cancellation of his passport.
- A.12 1953 July-December.  
  
Includes typescript copy of statements in Burhop's libel case returned to him in July by the editor of Atomic Scientists' News.
- A.13 1954.
- A.14 1955.
- A.15 1955-1962.  
  
Correspondence with Foreign Office re Burhop's undertaking to inform Foreign Office of his plans to visit Soviet bloc.
- A.16 Nd.

### Biographical

- A.17 Press-cuttings.
- A.18 Correspondence *re* Hungarian surgeon Professor Paul Rubanyi and his family, 1956-1957.
- A.19 Correspondence with Burhop's family and others in Australia, 1953, 1957-1958.
- A.20-A.32 Lenin International Peace Prize 1972.  
  
Burhop was awarded the Lenin Prize 'For Strengthening Peace Among the Peoples' for the years 1970-71 on 21 April 1972. He received the prize at a ceremony at the Soviet Embassy in London on 18 October 1972.
- A.20 Notification and arrangements for presentation of prize, April-October 1972.
- A.21-A.23 Letters and telegrams of congratulation on announcement of prize, May-July 1972. A few with replies by Burhop.
- A.21 May (1).
- A.22 May (2).
- A.23 June, July. Includes list of names and addresses of those who sent congratulations.
- A.24 List of those invited to award presentation, invitation card, speech of presentation and Burhop's reply.
- A.25, A.26 Letters and telegrams of congratulation on the presentation of the prize, October-December 1972. A few with replies by Burhop.
- A.25 October.
- A.26 November, December, nd. Includes Christmas and New Year cards.
- A.27 Correspondence and papers *re* donations from Lenin Prize money.

**Biographical**

- A.28 Award presentation photographs.
- A.29-A.31 Press-cuttings.  
3 folders.
- A.32 'Speech on occasion of presentation of prize to James Aldridge'.  
4pp manuscript draft by Burhop.
- A.33 Miscellaneous correspondence and papers, various dates, 1951-1959, 1972.
- A.34 Correspondence *re* possible nomination of Bertrand Russell for the World Peace Council's International Peace Prize, 1957.  
  
Russell's letter of 30 November explained why he did not wish to be nominated.
- A.35 *The Times* obituary of Burhop, 24 January 1980.  
  
Invitation to a memorial meeting 'to pay tribute to Eric Burhop's work for the abolition of nuclear weapons, for disarmament and international understanding'.

**SECTION B**

**PUGWASH CONFERENCES ON SCIENCE AND  
WORLD AFFAIRS**

**B.1-B.14**

Burhop played an important role in the organisation of the first conference which was held at Pugwash, Nova Scotia in July 1957.

With the exception of B.14 all the material relates to this first conference.

- B.1-B.4 'Relations of WFSW [World Federation of Scientific Workers] and 1st Pugwash. Incomplete.' Contents of Burhop's folder so inscribed divided into four for ease of reference.
- Correspondence and papers *re* organisation of first Pugwash Conference. Photocopies.
- B.1 1956 October-December.
- B.2 1957 January-March.
- B.3 1957 May, June.
- B.4 1957 July, November.
- B.5-B.14 'Pugwash'. Contents of Burhop's folder so inscribed divided into ten for ease of reference.
- B.5 Correspondence and papers *re* organisation of first Pugwash Conference, March, June 1957 and nd.
- Includes lists of possible participants, conference programmes.
- B.6 Correspondence arising from first Pugwash Conference, July-December 1957, March 1958.
- B.7 Discussion paper on 'Disarmament' by E. Rabinowitch.
- Duplicated copy of paper presented at first Pugwash conference; revised version dated 14 August 1957.

**Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs**

- B.8 Notes of discussions at first Pugwash Conference, etc.  
  
39pp manuscript + 4pp duplicated typescript on 'Legal questions relevant to the use of nuclear weapons (in connection with discussion on international control)'.  
  
B.9 Miscellaneous drafts *re* first Pugwash Conference.  
  
B.10-B.12 Press-cuttings *re* first Pugwash Conference. 3 folders.  
  
B.13 'Chapter 7 Actions of the W.F.S.W. leading up to the first Pugwash Conference' by Burhop.  
  
Photocopy of published text.  
  
B.14 Miscellaneous items *re* Pugwash, nuclear energy and peace issues, 1974-76.  
  
Includes correspondence and Vietnam war photographs.

INDEX OF CORRESPONDENTS

ADAMS, Ruth (Mrs Robert McCormick Adams)	B.6
AINLEY, T.	A.4
ALLEN, Douglas	A.5, A.7
AMALGAMATED ENGINEERING UNION	A.6
ANNAN, Noël Gilroy, Baron	A.24
ARTOBOLEVSKY, Ivan Ivanovich	A.25
ASSOCIATION OF CINEMATOGRAPH TELEVISION AND ALLIED TECHNICIANS	A.23
ASSOCIATION OF SCIENTIFIC WORKERS	A.2, A.4
ATOMIC SCIENTISTS' ASSOCIATION	A.12
AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATED PRESS	A.13
BARBER, Noel	A.6
BARNABY, Frank	A.22
BATCHELOR, A.L.	A.4
BAUDISCH, Kurt	B.3
BENJAMIN, John A.	A.19
BERNAL, Eileen	A.25
BIQUARD, Pierre	B.1-B.4, B.5
BOYD-CARPENTER, John Archibald, Baron	A.7
BRITISH PEACE COMMITTEE	A.4, A.7
BRITISH SOCIETY FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN SCIENCE	A.22
BRITISH SOVIET FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY	A.5-A.7
BURHOP, Henry A.	A.19
BUSH, Alan	A.23
BUTLER, Sir Clifford (Charles)	A.2
CARRUTHERS, Leslie W.	A.6
CHALMERS, R.A.	A.4, A.5
CHOU, Pei-Yuan	B.1-B.3, B.5
COCKROFT, Sir John (Douglas)	A.4, A.5
COLE, George H.A.	A.25
COOTE, Colin R.	A.14

Index of Correspondents

CORNFORTH, Maurice	A.4
COULSON, Charles Alfred	A.2
CUSACK, Dymphna	A.4, A.5
<i>DAILY TELEGRAPH</i>	A.14
DARLOW, Roy	A.19
DEBENHAM, Celia	A.4
de CASTRO, Josue	B.3
DOMBEY, Norman	A.22
DREFAHL, Guenther	A.25
DUNCAN-JONES, Vincent	A.34
DUTTON, J.K.	A.2
EATON, Cyrus Stephen	B.1, B.3, B.6
ENTWISTLE, W.W.	A.4
EWART, Arthur E.	A.4, A.5
FEATHER, Norman	A.4, A.5
FIRE BRIGADES UNION	A.5
FITZPATRICK, Brian	A.7, A.9
FOOT, Michael	A.6, A.7
FOREIGN OFFICE	A.4, A.5, A.15
GABOR, D.	A.18
GEORGE W.H.	A.2
GOLDRING, Patrick	A.13
GOODMAN, Arnold Abraham, Baron	A.4-A.7, A.9-A.13
HADEN-GUEST, Leslie Haden, Baron	A.4, A.7
HAMPSTEAD PEACE COUNCIL	A.7
HASTED, J.B.	A.21
HAZI, Vencel	A.25
HODGKIN, Dorothy Mary Crowfoot	See A.22
HORNER, John	A.4, A.5
HUMPHREY, John Herbert	A.18

**Index of Correspondents**

ISHLINSKI, Alexander Yurievich	A.25
JAMES, J.I.P. ('Jip')	A.18
KOTLIAR, Vladimir S.	B.14
KRISHNAN, Sir Kariamanikkam Srinivasa	B.2
LACASSAGNE, A.M.B.	B.6
LEEDS PEACE COMMITTEE	A.2
LESCOMBS, Bertram	A.4, A.6
MARTIN, Sir Leslie (Harold)	A.1
MAYHEW, E.B.	A.6
MIDDLETON, Peggy	A.2
MOTT, Sir Nevill (Francis)	A.4, A.5
MOUSSATCHÉ, H.	A.26
MUNRO, Duncan C.	A.2
NĚMEC, Th.	B.3
NETTLETON, Vera May née BURHOP	A.19
OLIPHANT, Sir Mark (Marcus Laurence Elwin)	A.1
OPARIN, Aleksandr Ivanovich	B.1-B.3, B.5
PEIERLS, Sir Rudolf (Ernst)	A.6
PFEIFFER, E.W. ('Bert')	B.14
POWELL, Cecil Frank	B.2, B.4, B.6
POWER, Edwin A.	A.21
PYE, Sir David (Randall)	A.7
RABINOWITCH, Eugene I.	B.3 See also B.7
RAHMAN, A.	A.21, A.33
RAWSON, R.R.	A.5
REID, Ian D.	A.7
RITCHIE-CALDER, Peter Ritchie, Baron	A.5
ROSENHEAD, Jonathan	A.22



**Index of Correspondents**

ROTLAT, Joseph	B.1
RUBANYI, Agnes	A.18
RUBINSTEIN, Harold Frederick	A.6
RUSSELL, Bertrand Arthur William, 3rd Earl	A.34, B.1, B.3
RUTMAN, R.J.	B.3
THE SALVATION ARMY	A.6, A.19
SAMUEL, Howard	B.1
SANDELLS, George W.	A.19
SANDER, H.	A.26
SELOVE, W.	B.6
SISAKYAN, Norair Martirosovich	B.1, B.2
SKIDMORE, Howard	B.6
SKOBELTSYN, Dmitri Vladimirovich	A.20
SOCIETY FOR CULTURAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE PEOPLES OF THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH AND THE USSR (SCR)	A.3
SOUTH EAST ASIA COMMITTEE	A.5, A.6
STEELE, Eric S.	A.25
ŠVESTKA, Bedřich	A.22
SZILARD, Leo	B.3
TIOMNO, J.	A.26
TITELMAN, Gregory	A.21
TODD, Judith	A.3
TOMONAGA, S.	B.6
TURI, Susanne	A.21
UNION OF SHOP, DISTRIBUTIVE AND ALLIED WORKERS	A.4, A.7
VALKO, E.	A.18
VERNON, Major Wilfrid Foulston	A.4
VIRE-TUOMINEN, Mirjam	A.33
VOZÁR, Libor	A.25

**Index of Correspondents**

WALPOLE, Joseph	A.33
WEISSBACH, H.	A.25, A.26
WEST, Jenny	A.33
WILKINS, Maurice Hugh Frederick	A.22
WOOSTER, William Alfred ('Peter')	A.27
WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION	A.7
WORLD FEDERATION OF SCIENTIFIC WORKERS	A.27, B.1-B.4
YANUSHKOVSKAYA, Tamara Petrovna	A.25