

Union Camp
Hodgkinson River
Thornborough
Sunday March 1883

Dear Will,

I now take
the pleasure of writing you a few
lines, hoping to find you in good
health as this leaves me at present
Dear Will, I am very glad to tell you
that we arrived up here all right without
having experienced any startling adven-
-tures. We have been up here five weeks now
& Father has been away four weeks out
of that, so I have been by myself a
good while. This is the worst place for
Blacks we have been in yet. Two or three
days after we came here I was out on
horseback & I seen seven blacks one
of them had a good tomahawk which he

For William Johnstone

must have stolen from someone. They were
 in the bottom of a deep Creek & I did not
 see them till I was about ten yards off them.
 They had no spears with them or else
 they might have made short work of me &
 the horse too. About two days ago there
 was a young man I knew named Delissa
 was speared by the blacks about two
 miles & a half from here. He had two or
 three tame blackboys with him & they were
 minding 2 or 3 hundred bullocks for a man
 named Middlemiss. It happened that 50 or 60
 of the bullocks strayed away & he left the two
 blackboys looking after the main lot & he went
 after the strays he did not come back that
 night & the two blackboys stripped & went
^{so that the wild blacks would not know them}
 to look for him they found his horse tied up
 to a tree & they seen a mob of wild Blacks a
 little way off but they could not see the
 man they thought he had been speared
 so one of them went into Thornborough for to

tell the Police. They came out & looked
 for him & found him laying on top of
 a rock with two spears through him &
 a lot of spears lying about him he had
 a revolver in his hand. You must
 excuse me for not writing before as the
 river has been flooded several times
 lately & the mail could not cross.

I will now conclude for present with
 best respects to your Mother & Father &
 the children & all my old friends & accept
 the same yourself. I remain your
~~affectionate~~ sincere friend.

E. W. Burns.

P. S. Send your address in your next Letter.

My address is
 Master E. W. Burns

Union Camp

Hodgkinson River

Near Thornborough

Queensland

Union Camp
Hodgkinson Goldfield
Queensland

July 15th 1883

Dear Will.

I received

your very welcome letter
dated June 16th all right &
was glad to see by it that
you were in good health
has this leaves me at present.
You said in your letter that
you had formed a Football
Club in the Choir I hope you
will have success ~~with~~ with
it & I wish I was able to be
a member too. Do you remem-
ber the great Match We played

once up in Haverley Park
against the Grammarians
& how we were greatly defea-
-ted by them. You also said in
your letter that you had seen
Charlie Clarke at the Gra-
-mmer School Sports & that he
said he had written to me
& received no answer to his
letter. If you see him again
you can tell him that I
received & answered his
letter about the same time
as I wrote to you last. I
do not go fossitting up here
as I did out at Hately Creek
as I have got work to do all
the week & up till dinnertime
P.S. Give my two Kisses for me

on Sundays also so I
have not got much time to
fossitt. I now get two pounds
per week wages, & I have to
pay one pound per week for
board, out of it so I could ^{save} one
pound per week nearly. Dear Hill
you told me before I left Sydney,
that you were going to get
some monthly books, or papers
such as the "Boys World" &c. If
you have got any old numbers
of them you can send us some
up if you like as it is very
miserable having nothing
hardly to read here.

The Blacks have come right
into this camp lately & we

give them old Shirts Blankets
&c. so as to keep on friendly terms
with them, they are a treacherous
lot & some of the people would
sooner that they did not come
in at all as when they get to
know the run of the place
they may attack it some night
when least expected. If they
only was to try I think they
could do it right enough.

One day we levelled an old augur
at four of them & they took it for
a rifle & cleared like Old Harry
I have no more news to tell
at present so will conclude
with best respects to your Father & Mother
& sisters & accept the same yourself
I remain your sincere Chum E. W. Barry

Union Camp
March

Dear Will

I received your
very welcome letter all right & was
sorry to hear that Edwin had been
ill with the liver complaint but hope
that he is quite well again now.

You said that Reginald Lince had
given you some Books for me, of
which I am very glad as I have
read all the Books that you send
up. I am surprised at you for saying
that you would pay me ^{what it cost} for bringing
down a few curios & if you say that
again I will have a good mind not
to bring any, so there. In your next
letter will you please send me up
a receipt for ~~the~~ preserving Bird skins
as I have had a good few & they

all went rotten & I had to throw them away & If I go on that way I will not be able to fetch any down to you. There was a man killed here the other day, he was out in the bush stripping Bark off a tree when a dead limb fell on his head & crushed it, when he was found he was quite black looking which I suppose was the effects of the sun.

You said in your letter that when I come down next you will swim me for £10,000 which challenge I accept & if you like you can alter it to £20,000. I can swim across the River here when it is up & there is a current of six or seven miles an hour, but I might not be able to do much in the Breakers as I expect you have to get used to it like any thing else.

The Blacks have speared two horses about ten miles from here since my last one of which got away with the spear in it, but they killed & ate the other. I was coming home from being out looking for horses the other day when I met a mob of blacks in the River some of the blacks had 4 or 5 spears each but as they knew me & were coming onto the camp they did not do any thing to me. If I had met them two or three miles away I would not get in to their reach.

I have no more news to tell you this time so will conclude with kind Love to Edwin & Yourself I

remain your

Faithful Chum

Jed

remember me to your Mother & Father & Sisters. C.W.B.

A couple of Queenslanders
accompanies this.

E. W. B.

get
Union Camp

Sept. 1883

Dear Will

I received

your very welcome letter dated
20th August all right & was glad
to see by it that you were in good
health as this leaves me at pre-
sent. Dear Will This place is
pretty dull now there are not many
boys of my own age about to mix
up with I wish that you were
only living up here we could
have such jolly fine sport going
out shooting parrots pigeons &c.
& every Sunday we could get
two or three more chaps & go
out riding I have only got one
good mate up here whose name
is Jerry Whalen he is driving

an horse wagon, he is about
 19 or 20 years of age, him & me
 have rare old rides mustering
 horses &c. & We go into the Chow's
 gardens & make them shout —
 Bananas Grenadillas Melons
 & so on. Dear Kill there are very
 few Kangaroos about here I have
 not seen one since I been here
 The Diggers Hunt them all for
 food. Yesterday me & another chap
 went for a bogey & we came
 up on a large camp of about
 30 or 40 Blacks they were making
 spears they had an awful lot
 of them & some of them were
 ugly looking weapons about
 9 or 10 feet long & barbs at the
 points & pieces of sharp quartz
 stuck along near the joint.
 I was throwing some of

them. But I could not manage
 to get one this time, I will try
 to get you a few boomerangs &
 if I can. There are no Birds
 nests about yet as it is too early
 in the season. Dear Will. You
 said in your last letter that
 you had two copies of the "Boys of
 England" & also two of the
 "Boys own Paper" I would be
 very glad if you would send
 them up as I would like to
 read them I will send down
 a few stamps to put on them
 & if you like you could send
 up the "Sydney Mail" something
 & I will send you down the
 "Queenslander" or the "Kild River
 Times" Dear Will. you can tell
 Erve Schneider that he can
 write up if he likes for I do

not know his address he can
 get my address off you. Dear
 Will. You said in your letter
 that you thought Charlie Clarke
 was my "chum" indeed he is
 not as him & me have never
 been such mates as you & I
 are & have been. So if you like
 you & I will be sworn "chums"
 & stick to one another thro'
 thick & thin.

I have no more news to tell
 you at present so will conclude
 with kind love to Eve, Mudge
 & all old friends also ~~to~~ to
 your Mother, Father & Sisters
 & accept the same yourself
 I remain

your sincere "Chum"

P.S. Excuse scribbling E. W. Burns
 as I am in a hurry

Write Soon Please.

Union Camp
Hodgkinson Gold Field
Queensland

October 20th 1853

Dear Will

I received your
very welcome letter last Sunday
& was sorry to see by it that you
had a bad cold but I hope it is all
right by this time. You said in
your letter that you would send up
the Books at once but I have not
received them yet. I might get
them to morrow. I said in the
letter that I would send some
stamps to put on them I enclosed
about a shillings worth with
it & then I found out that Queens
land stamps would be no good
in Sydney so I tore it open &
took them out & being in a great

hurry I did not scratch it out
but it is no matter. I will
booze you up when I come
down next. You said in your
last that you had nearly had a
quarrel with Alf. Allen about the
cricket Ball & that you thought
Joe Sutton had put him up to
it. I would not wonder a bit
as I never liked Sutton at school
I always thought that he
was a sly sneaking coward.

Dear Will. The Birdnesting season
is hardly in up here yet but
when it is I will keep a bright
lookout for eggs of any descrip-
tion. I think the chance of getting
a Kangaroo for you is very green
as I have been out all over the
country about here horsehunting
& I never seen one yet. & I have

only seen the tracks of one
small one & that was about ~~four~~
fourteen miles down the River.
Dear Will. I am getting to be
a pretty good swimmer now
I am not ^{afraid of} going out of my depth
Next Wet Season I am going
to try & swim across this river
when it is up. I swam across
last wet season on horse back
& I got drenched up to my neck
nearly & you could only see
the horse's head & tail. I do
not think that I will be coming
down for a good while yet I
would like to come down to see
my old Chums. Dear Will do you
call to mind the prizes that
Harrison promised us for
drawing 10. I expect that they
look as green as ever I wish I

did not let him have all ~~my~~ my
good drawings. Dear Will. I
forgot to tell you in my last
letter that I had an Uncle &
Aunt & ~~ten~~ eleven cousins just
arrived from England I have
not seen them yet. My Uncle
is a tinsmith etc & has just
opened a shop a few doors above
the National School at Padding-
ton their name is Crabbe I
~~expect~~ expect you pass that way going
to work of a morning. I have
no more news to tell you at
present so will conclude with
Kind love to Eve, Mudge, R. How-
son, Tartan & all old friends
& accept the same yourself
I remain your

Sincere "Chum"

E. W. Burns.

P.S. A Queen's Lanter accompanies
this. E.W.B. 4.

Union Camp
Nov: 29th 1853

Dear Will

I received your very
welcome letter all right also
the four books for which I am
very much obliged to you. I have
been expecting them this last month
as I have no books up here hardley.

Dear Will. I have the pleasure to tell
you we have had rain up here at last
and it was very badly wanted as
we had had none for between -
eight & nine months & there was not
a bit of grass about the place &
all the cattle & horses were nearly
starving. It began to rain on
Sunday morning & about nine
o'clock at night the River was
coming down a banker.

⁴
I done a good deal of damage at
Thornborough having washed away
a dam that cost about £1000.

There are plenty of Fish here now.
I have rare sport catching them, at
night, I light a fire on the bank
which attracts them & then I put
in a line or two & sometimes
haul out a good many fish some
of which weighs two pounds.

They always come up here to breed
in the Rairy Season from the Mitchell
a very large river which runs
into the Gulf of Carpentaria.

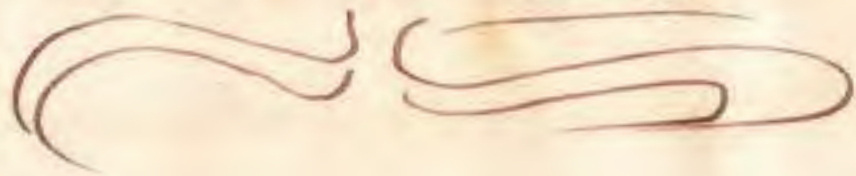
Since I wrote last there has been
a man speared by the Blacks about
15 miles down the River. he is an
old friend of mine named W. Guinness
of whom I told you about in a former
letter. He was looking after cattle
when he came upon a mob of Diggers

who were having a glorious Feast.
having speared a Cow & Calf. He rode
up to them & they did not run away
he was riding a young horse which
got ~~big~~ fidgety & having a rifle in one
hand he could hardly hold her &
when he had his back turned
towards them they threw a lot of
spears at him one of which ^{about ten foot long} entered
from the back just below the shoulder
& went through him he then galloped
away a quarter of a mile with the
whole tribe after him y yelling
like a lot of devils they thought
he would be weak & fall off the
horse but he did not. he then got off
and broke off the ~~long~~ end of the spear
in the fork of a Tree & came up here
with the other part of the spear
in him all the time & had it pulled
out. It was a very narrow ~~escape~~ ^{escape}

for him he is all right again now
I have no more news to tell you
at present. I would like to
come down for a trip at Christmas
but I don't think I will be able to
I will now conclude for present with
kind love to Eve ^{and} and accept the
same yourself I remain your

Sincere Chum

Led



P.S. If you have any more Boys own
papers down there that you do not
want you can send them up:

Queenlander accompanies this

Union Camp

May 17th 1884

Dear Will

I received your very welcome letter on Sunday & it was dated March 4th so it must have been mislaid some where or other I am glad you sent me a receipt for the Bird skins & I will start getting some as soon as I can. I am glad to hear that you have joined the Artillery Corps, when I come down I might join it if I can, do you get a carbine to take home or do you only get them of a Saturday. You said in your letter that you sent some Books with it. I did not get them last Sunday but expect to next Sunday. You also said that you proposed to write on the receipt of one another

letters, but we only get the mail here once a week & when it comes it only stops an hour or so. So that when I get a letter from you I am not able to answer it until the next week. I am sorry to hear that Ernie has cut you & taken to Ernie MacKenzie but then when I come down we will be just as well without him.

^{up} There was an accident happened in the claim a couple of weeks ago by which a man named Jim Simpson had his collar bone broken, but he is getting better by degrees now.

He was ^{up} topsman at the claim, landing Buckets &c, & he had to send some saplings down in the bucket & they got stuck at the mouth of the shaft & he told the Boy that was driving the Whip horse to hold the rope while he fixed the Bucket, so he

he gave it a push & it did not budge
he then jumped on it. & it suddenly
gave way & the Boy was not strong
enough to hold the rope so had to let
go (& as the shaft is not straight but
slanting like the roof of a House)
& Jim slid down to the Bottom a
distance of 200ft. when he was brought
up to the surface every body thought
that he was killed, all his Back
was skinned & he was bruised all
over & his collar Bone was Broken.
I had to go to Thornborough (20 miles)
for a doctor I had a good horse &
galloped nearly all the way. The Doctor
sent a cart for to fetch him ~~to the~~
to the Hospital it will be a couple
of months before he is all right again
You asked me how long it would
be before I came down. We might
come down in 3 or 4 months or we

might not come down for a year.

I am getting sick of being up here
with no mates.

I have no more to say at present
so will conclude with kind love to
~~you~~ your Mother & Father & sisters
also Reg. Since I accept the same
yourself I remain your ~~affectionate~~

Faithful

Chum

Yed

Union Camp
July 12th 1884

Dear Will

I received your very welcome letter all right on Sunday week & the Book's last Sunday for which I am very much Obliged to you & I wish I had come to send you down in return. You must please excuse me for not writing last week after I got your letter but I put off writing it until Saturday night & I happened to have some-thing to do until twelve O'clock at night & as I was tired & had to go to work pretty early on Sunday morning I thought I would leave it till this week. I am sorry to hear that you & Erv are not very Great Cturns now as he has taken

to Carn Mr: Renzie. I got a letter
from Erve a couple of weeks ago
& he said that he had been laid
up for three weeks through a charge
of Powder exploding in his gun
while out shooting it was a good
joke that he did not lose his sight
altogether. It was a very mean
trick of Arthur Sullick to play
on Reg. Since about the Choir
Money. I am very much obliged
for the Information you gave me
about the Artillery Cadets & feel
proud to have one of them for a
chum - & if we both get pretty
good shots we will be able to
have some rare old shooting bouts
when we go Elephants Hunting
in Africa - The Weather is very
cold up here now as it is the depth
of Winter & we can hear a few

extra blankets of a night.
I see by one of the Papers that Will
Shorts Father is gone Insolvent.
Dear Will I ~~do~~ wish that you
were up here now as I have some
rare old shooting expeditions on Sun-
days & I mostly get some good Pigeons
or ducks - The Water is all drying
up in the Creeks & Lagoons & the
Ducks come onto the River for Water
& I sometimes see an odd Turkey
or two but I have not shot any yet.
I must now conclude for present
with kind love to you Mother &
Father & Jey & all the little ones
& Reg. and the same for yourself
I remain

Your

Faithful Chum

Yed

I will write soon a longer letter

excuse scribbling please Ted

Clifton House
Stanley St
Burywood

Nov. 7th 1884

Dear Will

You must please
excuse me for not writing or calling to
see you before, but we shifted up here
about a month ago & I took a bad cold
somehow or other & it turned ^{into} a slight
touch of Bronchitis, but I am getting
all right again now. I think it was
through knocking about too much in the
cold nights after coming down from the
Hot Climate. If it is fine on Monday
next I intend coming down & going out
somewhere with ~~H~~ & my Cousins.

And if you have got a Holiday I would
be very glad if you would come with
us as I would like to spend the day
with you or if you cannot come I will
come up & see you on Monday Night

I have no more news to tell you at
present so will conclude with kind love
to your Father & Mother & Jim & all the
rest & accept the same yourself I remain
your Faithful old Chum
E. W. Burns

P. S. Try & come on Monday. And if
if you can will you meet me at
about nine o'clock at my Cousins.
E. W. Burns