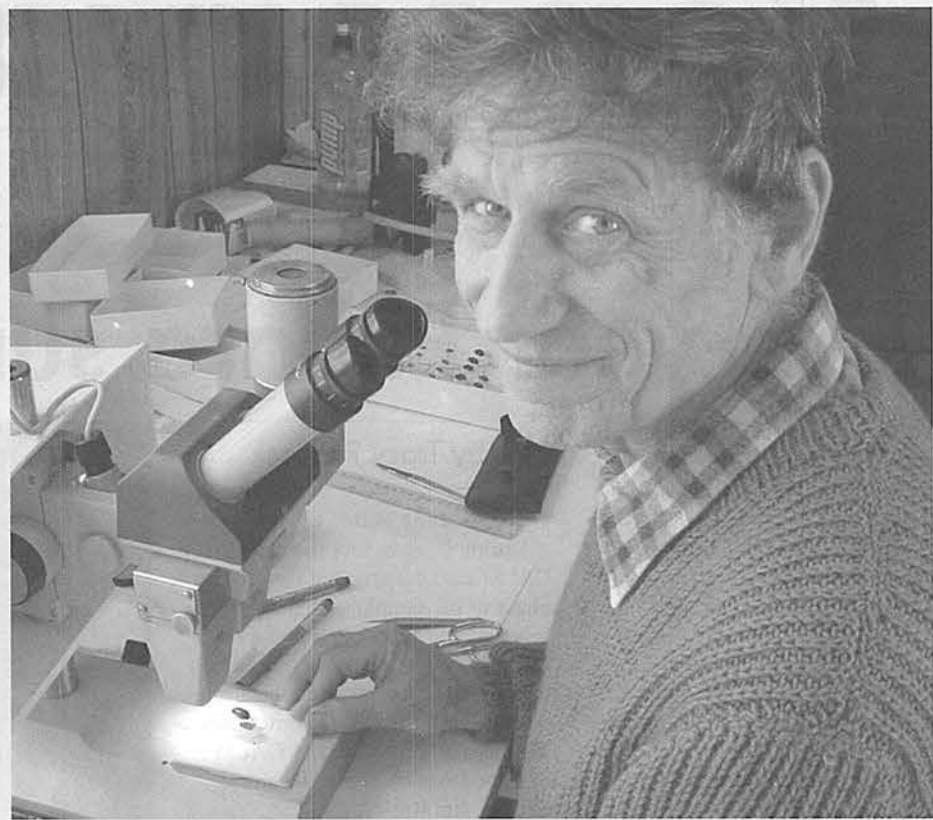


Distinguished scientist retires



Tom Burbidge at work. Photo – Rhianna King

TOM Burbidge retired from the WA Public Service in October 2005, after 41 years.

He started as a technical officer at the Department of Agriculture's Entomology Branch in 1964, working on pasture pests, grain pests, medfly and budworm.

In 1968 Steve Curry was appointed forest entomologist, and Tom worked with him on jarrah leafminer, pin hole and other tree borers, Ips bark beetle, leaf blister sawfly, and clearfelling impacts on forest invertebrates until 1984.

During this time, Tom identified nearly 520,000 insects.

Forest entomological research was transferred to me in 1984, and Tom joined CALM in 1986 as a technical officer.

He worked on quantifying damage to jarrah foliage by insect herbivores (often using a cherrypicker), and also became adept at identifying spring beetles, especially *Liparetrus* species (sometimes a significant pest of blue gum and oil mallee seedlings).

Tom also identified the invertebrates col-

by Ian Abbott

lected in the Kingston study, which assessed the impact of various logging treatments on fauna in jarrah forest, near Bridgetown.

During the past five years, Tom identified many of the invertebrates collected in FORESTCHECK and the Walpole Fine Grain Fire Mosaic, ongoing programs to monitor logging and fire impacts across the forests.

He also played a lead role in developing BugBase, the database of CALM's terrestrial invertebrate collection.

At a well-attended farewell function, Tom was presented with several gifts.

One was a collection box with a number of strange insect specimens modelled by Dr Janet Farr, one of Tom's FORESTCHECK co-workers based at the Manjimup research centre.

The most interesting specimen was of *Burbidgus tomus*, belonging to a newly erected order of insects known as Calmoptera.