

QUEEN VICTORIA MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY

CHS 113

THE DOUGLAS COLLECTION

**Journalists, New South Wales
Bank Managers, Tasmania**

INTRODUCTION

THE RECORDS

- 1. Ronald Campbell Gunn*
- 2. Ronald Campbell Gunn Douglas*
- 3. Mrs Jean Douglas*
- 4. Ronald Irvine Douglas*
- 5. Miscellaneous Items*
- 6. Books*

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INTRODUCTION

The collection mainly relates to Ronald Campbell Gunn Douglas (1870-1921) and his son Ronald Irvine Douglas (1899-1973).

Ronald Campbell Gunn Douglas was born at Launceston in 1870, the son of Henry William Douglas and his wife Jane Franklin, nee Gunn. From May 1885 to March 1886 he was a member of the Launceston Volunteer Rifle Regiment. He was appointed manager of the National Bank of Tasmania at Gormanston in 1894 and a Justice of the Peace in 1896. In 1897 he married Jean Clarke Irvine. He was superintendent of the West Coast Agencies of the Australian Widows' Fund from March 1898 to September 1899, then manager of the Zeehan branch of the National Bank from September 1899. He resigned in June 1901 as he found 'it very difficult to live here within my salary...I have decided after full consideration to go to South Africa with a view to improving my position...'. (See 2/2, Letter Book, p. 17)

From 1902 until 1912 he was town treasurer of the Municipality of East London, Cape Colony, South Africa. He returned on the S.S. *Grantully Castle* in April 1912 and by 1913 was back in Tasmania. In 1917 he was manager of the National Bank of Tasmania/Commercial Bank of Australia at Campbell Town (the Commercial Bank took over the operations of the National Bank) and in 1920 was appointed manager of the Commercial Bank of Australia's Derby branch. He wrote articles for various newspapers, sometimes using a pseudonym, and in 1909 his article on coinage was published in *The Lone Hand*, an Australian monthly magazine. (See 6/7)

Ronald Douglas was accidentally killed by a falling tree at Derby in July 1921. (John Beswick's book *Brothers' Home: the Story of Derby Tasmania*, 2003, gives a description of the accident.) He was survived by his widow, son Irvine and daughters Flora and Jane.

Ronald Irvine (known as Irvine) Douglas was born at Zeehan in 1899, the son of Ronald Campbell Gunn Douglas and his wife Jean Clarke, nee Irvine. He was educated at Selbourne College, East London, South Africa, and later at the State High School, Launceston.

He joined the Commonwealth Bank after leaving school, but turned to journalism. By 1927 he was editing the *Sydney Sun-Pictorial*. He was appointed the first Commonwealth Publicity Officer in 1934 and from 1934 to 1938 he was also private secretary to Prime Minister J A Lyons. In 1940 he became editor and manager of Australian Associated Press in London. After the war he was manager and editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald's* London staff. On his return to Australia in 1949 he became the paper's political correspondent. From 1952 to 1964 he worked for Mirror Newspapers, then for the Bank of New South Wales as press adviser until his death. Up to the very last he was a regular public affairs commentator with the radio division of the Australian Broadcasting Commission.

Irvine Douglas, one of Australia's most distinguished journalists, died in Sydney in February 1973. He was survived by his widow, Mrs Williamina Douglas.

The collection was donated to the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery in 1975.
It was previously registered as 1975/79/1

1. Ronald Campbell Gunn

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|-----|---|------|
| 1/1 | Letter dated 19 July 1862 from Attorney General, W L Dobson, appointing R C Gunn, Launceston, a Commissioner of the Supreme Court | 1862 |
| 1/2 | Letter dated 28 December 1876 with original envelope, from Theodore Bartley, Kerry Lodge, near Launceston, to R C Gunn, Newstead, with an extract from a letter from R P Stuart, Zurich, Switzerland, praising Gunn's character | 1876 |
| 1/3 | Pencil note re magnifying glass which belonged to Sir William Hooker and was given to Gunn by Sir Joseph Hooker | nd |
| 1/4 | Piece of notepaper with crest, from Newstead House | nd |

2. Ronald Campbell Gunn Douglas, grandson of R C Gunn

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| 2/1 | Birthday cards 1886 from family members, letters to R C G Douglas, 1892-1915 | 1886-1915 |
| 2/2 | R Douglas, 'Unrivalled Letter Book' (with Irvine Douglas' bookplate) | 1895-1921 |
| 2/3 | Scrapbook of newspaper cuttings (includes articles by R C G Douglas; paragraph in <i>East London Daily Dispatch</i> , 2 September 1921, re his death) | 1902-1921 |
| 2/4 | Launceston Volunteer Rifle Regiment certificate of discharge to Volunteer Ronald Douglas, 6 March 1886 | 1886 |
| 2/5 | Banquet menu, 3 December 1902; dinner invitation, East London, 4 December 1902 | 1902 |
| 2/6 | Thos. Cook & Son card re London tour for Mr & Mrs Douglas, nd; program of 'Trial by Jury', S.S. <i>Grantully Castle</i> , 9 April 1912 (R C G Douglas was a member of the cast) | 1912,
nd |
| 2/7 | Notice in English and Chinese re Australian banks temporarily ceasing issuing drafts on foreign countries | c1920 |
| 2/8 | Manuscript article by R Douglas on Christmas holidays; manuscript, typed notes on Adye Douglas headed 'Gallery of Eminent Australians' | nd |

2/9 Geo. L Finlay, Maire, welcome to Campbell Town to 'Monsieur le General et Messieurs les membres de la Mission Francaise', manuscript c1918

3. Mrs Jean Douglas, wife of R C G Douglas

3/1 Correspondence 1901-1935

4. Ronald Irvine Douglas (known as Irvine), son of R C G Douglas

4/1 Correspondence (includes family trees) 1901-1972

4/2 *The Tasmanian Trainee*, May 1914 (annotated by Irvine Douglas) 1914

4/3 Irvine Douglas, State High School, Launceston, report 1916

4/4 Card with illustration of The Guildhall, annotated on verso, 'We went to the Silver Jubilee Ball in 1935. King Geo V & Queen Mary' nd

4/5 Savage Club, Ladies Night, Savoy Hotel, [London], menu (Irvine Douglas was a member of the Savage Club) 1947

4/6 Australia Lodge, no. 6505, London, notices, April, December 1948, March 1949 (Irvine Douglas was a member) 1948-1949

4/7 Borough of Dunheved, otherwise Launceston, special meeting of the Town Council to confer honorary freedom of the Borough on Sir Claude Ernest Weymouth James 1948

4/8 Newspaper cutting re E O Scott, annotated 'Brilliant but eccentric, Irvine's class mate' nd

4/9 Death notice for Grace Mary Douglas, died 4 July 1970, Sydney; death notice for Ida Constance Campbell (nee Douglas), died 16 August 1971, Sydney 1970, 1971

4/10 Newspaper cutting re Mangana mining, mentions Peter Irvine 1971

4/11 Obituary for R I Douglas, Bank of NSW Staff News, February 1973 1973

4/12 Photocopy of newspaper cutting from the *Evening Post*, Wellington, re Mrs Williamina Douglas, with note written by Mrs Douglas re R C Gunn's gold watch c1975

5. Miscellaneous Items

- 5/1 Newspaper cutting, 'Launceston Letter', nd; re four ANZACs laying wreaths at Carr Villa, nd; reprint of letter to the Editor, *Canberra Times*, 3 November 1931, 'Is it angling?' ; unsourced newspaper article, May 1956, which mentions Adye Douglas; *The Express*, 4 July 1959, article about Ronald Campbell Gunn; *Daily Mirror*, 18 October 1972, article on Sir John Franklin; *Examiner*, *Tasmanian Life*, 7 March 1972, article on Sir Adye Douglas and Sir Richard Dry

6. Books

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|-----|---|------|
| 6/1 | Robert Burns, <i>Poems, chiefly in the Scottish Dialect</i> | 1803 |
| 6/2 | Robert Burns, <i>The Poetical Works of Robert Burns</i> (inscribed 'Irvine Douglas, Newstead, 1918') | 1825 |
| 6/3 | Charles Darwin, <i>Journal of researches...voyage of the H.M.S. Beagle</i> (Launceston Church Grammar School prize awarded to Neil Douglas, brother of R C G Douglas, 1891) | 1889 |
| 6/4 | Norman Douglas, <i>South Wind</i> (with Irvine Douglas' bookplate) | 1927 |
| 6/5 | Kenneth Duffield, <i>Savages and Kings</i> (with Irvine Douglas' bookplate) (Irvine Douglas was a member of the Savage Club) | 1945 |
| 6/6 | Alexander Dumas, <i>The Journal of Madame Giovanni</i> (with Irvine Douglas' bookplate) | 1944 |
| 6/7 | <i>The Lone Hand</i> , 1 December 1909 (includes article 'The money we use', by R C G Douglas), (with Irvine Douglas' bookplate) | 1909 |
| 6/8 | Geoffrey Wall, <i>Letters of an Airman</i> (with Irvine Douglas' bookplate) | 1918 |

OTHER SOURCES

QVMAG, Community History, 1983.P.2470, 1986.P.1190