

# QUEEN VICTORIA MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY

## CHS 40

### THE EXAMINER W R ROLPH COLLECTION

#### **Businessmen, Launceston Newspapers, Launceston**

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## INTRODUCTION

William Robert Rolph was born at Carrick on 26 March 1864, the son of Daniel, licensee of the Prince of Wales Hotel, and Henrietta Louisa (nee Ives) Rolph. He was educated in Launceston. After leaving school he worked for Douglas & Collins, solicitors, for about two years, followed by five years with Dalgety, Moore (later Du Croz, Smith) & Co. About 1886 he left Tasmania for mercantile employment in Brisbane, Townsville and Sydney.

An accomplished violinist, Mr Rolph subsequently travelled to England and the Continent with his sister Ada to continue his music studies, but eye trouble forced him to abandon his plans. Upon his return to Launceston in the early 1890s, he became chief clerk in the Railway Department, then entered into partnership with Edward Sheargold as mining agents and sharebrokers. Later Mr Rolph and Alex T Young practised as public accountants and trade trustees under the firm name Rolph and Young. A T Cruickshank subsequently joined the firm.

Mr Rolph and Mr Young became associated with the *Launceston Examiner* in November 1897. After Mr Young's retirement due to ill health in 1916 the firm became W R Rolph & Sons.

Under Mr Rolph's direction *The Examiner* published the *Weekly Courier* from 1901 to 1935, the *Saturday Evening Express* was commenced in 1924 and in 1938 the radio station 7EX was established. In 1908 he inaugurated *The Examiner* Empty Stocking Fund. Later an annual children's picnic was associated with this fund and attending the picnic was one of his greatest pleasures.

A caring man with wide interests, Mr Rolph was involved with an impressive number of organisations. He was chairman of the Tasmanian Permanent Executors' and Trustees' Association Ltd; director and past chairman of the Equitable Building Society; member of the Launceston Public Library Board; foundation member and past president of the Northern Branch of the Royal Society and a trustee of the Northern Home for Boys, Queen Victoria Hospital, Ministering Children's League Convalescent Home and Lyons Memorial Bursary Fund. He was a government nominee on the Launceston General Hospital Board, chairman of the Ramsay Memorial Library Fund, a member of the Launceston Commercial Travellers' Association and Returned Soldiers League clubs and first secretary pro tem of the Launceston Rotary Club. An early motoring enthusiast, he was a vice president of the Tasmanian Automobile Club, a member of the Northern Tourist Association and vice president of the Australian Provincial Press Association for a quarter of a century. He was a member of the 1929 Flood Relief Committee.

During the First World War he was instrumental in establishing many patriotic funds and was one of the original members of the Fathers' Association. His son, Robert Stewart, who joined the AIF in 1915, served overseas until early 1919.

Probably his greatest interest was music. A foundation member (1903) and a member of the first executive of the Launceston Literary and Musical Competitions

Association, at the time of his death he was senior vice president, having been associated with the competitions for over 40 years. Vice president of four Launceston bands and a member of the advisory committee of the Australian Music Board examinations, he was a staunch supporter of all visiting artists.

In his youth a keen swimmer and boxer, Mr Rolph was closely identified with the "Learn to Swim" campaign, president of the Esk Lacrosse Club and enjoyed watching cricket and vigoro matches.

Deeply conscious of the responsibilities of the press, for nearly half a century he influenced *The Examiner's* policies and under his guidance the paper achieved a high standard in Australian journalism. A patriotic Launceston citizen, he did much to promote industrial and other developments in the north of the state.

While in London, on 30 January 1892 he married London born Emily Jane Bickell. Their six children were born in Launceston: Gordon (1893-1959), Robert Stewart (1894-1965), Dorice Alice, later Mrs S B Stewart (1897-1930), Mavis Emily (1898-1958), Trevor William (1901-1923) and William Henry (1905-). Mrs Rolph died on 16 November 1936.

After an illness lasting almost four years, W R Rolph died at his home 'Strathairlie', 52 Elphin Road, on 23 January 1948, survived by three sons and a daughter. His funeral service was held at the Frederick Street Christ Church (Congregational) where he had been a regular attendant.

The collection was donated to the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery in 1998 and 2007.

## ***1. Letterbooks***

- |      |   |           |
|------|---|-----------|
| 1/1  | July 1889-March 1890, cover endorsed 'Letter Book No.14', handwritten letters from Barnard Mackay & Co. (wine & spirit merchants, St John Street, Launceston), pp 1 - 750, indexed A-Z, most are addressed to Tasmanian residents | 1889-1890 |
| 1/2  | December 1897-December 1904, letters (mostly handwritten, some typed) from W Rolph, some in his capacity as Trustee Henry Button's Trust Estate, pp 1 - 525, indexed A-Z  | 1897-1904 |
| 1/3  | January 1908, December 1911, letters (handwritten) from W R Rolph, pp 1 - 8, not indexed  | 1908-1911 |
| 1/4  | August 1910-November 1913, letters (handwritten) from W R Rolph, (often family matters) pp 1 - 250, not indexed   | 1910-1913 |
| 1/5  | November 1913-November 1914, letters (handwritten) from W R Rolph, (often family matters) pp 1 - 252, not indexed   | 1913-1914 |
| 1/6  | November 1914-January 1916, letters (handwritten) from W R Rolph, (often family matters) pp 1 - 255, not indexed  | 1914-1916 |
| 1/7  | December 1914-December 1917, letters (typed) from Rolph & Young, pp 1 - 855, indexed A-Z; letters (handwritten and some typed) from W R Rolph, June 1924-September 1925 at back of book   | 1914-1925 |
| 1/8  | January 1916-November 1916, letters (handwritten) from W R Rolph (often family matters) pp 1 - 250, not indexed   | 1916      |
| 1/9  | May 1916-December 1918, letters from W R Rolph  | 1916-1918 |
| 1/10 | November 1916-December 1918, letters from W R Rolph   | 1916-1918 |
| 1/11 | December 1918-July 1921, letters from W R Rolph   | 1918-1921 |
| 1/12 | March 1921, two letters from W R Rolph  | 1921      |
| 1/13 | July 1921-June 1924, letters from W R Rolph, several loose letters November 1925 at back of book  | 1921-1924 |
| 1/14 | November 1925-August 1929, letters from W R Rolph   | 1925-1929 |
| 1/15 | September 1934-May 1937, letters from W R Rolph   | 1934-1937 |

## ***2. Correspondence***

2/1	Letters, postcards to W R Rolph	1907-1944
2/2	Letters from W R Rolph	1928-1941
2/3	Correspondence between W R Rolph and George Stone	1930-1940
2/4	Letters to and from G B Rolph re his father, W R Rolph's illness	1944
2/5	Postcard from Robert S Rolph	c1918?

### ***3.Scrapbooks etc***

3/1	<i>Examiner</i> scrapbook (includes forms, form letters, flyers, programs for two Alan Wilkie productions, nd, and for "Sally" at National Theatre, 1925 etc) <b><i>Oversize item</i></b>	1912-1936
3/2	Scrapbook of <i>Examiner</i> ? cuttings concerning World War 1	1914
3/3	Newspaper articles from various papers by and about members of the Rolph family <b><i>Oversize item</i></b>	1917-1941

### ***4.Photographs***

4/1	Photograph (29 x 38 cms) of W R Rolph's four sons and two daughters ( <b><i>Oversize item</i></b> )	nd
4/2	Dorice [Rolph]	1910
4/3	Mavis [Rolph]	1910
4/4	Eight photographs of unidentified men, most probably W R Rolph's sons (includes soldier in uniform, probably R S Rolph, with W R Rolph)	nd
4/5	W R Rolph and Dr C A Hogg, Low Head	nd
4/6	Gordon G Rae	1931
4/7	Frederick S Denney, King Island	1935
4/8	Dickson Gregory (includes information on <i>The romance of the Edina</i> )	1935
4/9	Mayor & Mrs Gee in car decorated by 9 <sup>th</sup> Battery	nd
4/10	"The Meeting Karoola", photograph of group of unidentified men	nd
4/11	Government Accommodation House, Mienna;	nd

	photograph of car in the snow at Mienna	
4/12	Three photographs of flood taken from Trevallyn [1929]	
4/13	Part of front of house, Trevallyn, showing statue of Venus	nd
4/14	Nine photographs of unidentified grave, Carr Villa	1930
<b><i>5. Theatre and Concert Programs</i></b>		
5/1	A.B.C. Military Band, Programme 1	nd
5/2	Wilhelm Backhaus, Albert Hall	1930
5/3	Balokovic Concerts	1931
5/4	Charles Benson, Albert Hall	1932
5/5	John Brownlee, National Theatre, three items	1933
5/6	Comedy Harmonists	nd
5/7	Corrick Family, Albert Hall	1932
5/8	Dante, His Majesty's Theatre, Brisbane	1933?
5/9	Galli-Curci Concerts	1932
5/10	Philip Hargrave, Town Hall, Brisbane, two items	1933
5/11	Hobart's Music Week	1932
5/12	La Meri	nd
5/13	Launceston Choral Union, first recital, 18 October, second concert 1932-33 season	nd, 1932
5/14	Launceston Concert Orchestra Society, Academy Theatre, 22/10/1930, 16/12/1931	1930, 1931
5/15	Launceston Operatic Society, "Katinka"	nd
5/16	Launceston Players, "Hay Fever", Academy Theatre	1929
5/17	Lotte Lehmann, Albert Hall, flyer	c1937
5/18	Alexander Marsh with Miss Lorna Forbes and Company, "The Ringer"	nd

5/19	Moiseiwitsch, Albert Hall	1932
5/20	J C Newlands, Mechanics Institute	nd
5/21	The Strollers, "Eliza Comes to Stay", Academy of Music	1925
5/22	Josef Szigeti	c1933
5/23	Alexander Watson, National Theatre, two items	1930
5/24	Westminster Glee Singers, two items	nd
5/25	J C Williamson programs: "Hold My Hand", "Katinka", "Merry Widow", "The Toreador", "When Ladies Meet", "White Horse Inn" souvenir	c1933
5/26	Miss Laura Woodman, pupils' pianoforte recitals, 10/12/1932, 7/12/1935	1932, 1935

#### ***6. Company Reports Etc***

6/1	W T Bell & Co., Directors' reports, 1923, 1924, 1925, 1927	1923-1927
6/2	Electrolytic Zinc Company of Australia Limited, reports and statement of accounts, report of proceedings at AGM	1937
6/3	Equitable Building Society, small brochure	nd
6/4	Fingal Cement Company, prospectus	c1921
6/5	P O Fysh & Company, prospectus, directors' reports, 1923, 1924, 1925, 1927, 1931, 1932	1920-1932
6/6	Herd & Company Limited, directors' reports, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924, 1925, 1926, 1927, 1930	1920-1930
6/7	King Island Co-operative Dairy Factory Limited, annual report and balance sheet, 1923, balance sheet and statement of accounts, 1936, 1937	1923-1937
6/8	Kelsall & Kemp (Tasmania) Limited, prospectus, directors' reports etc, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1925, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1929, 1930, 1932, 1934	1920-1934
6/9	Launceston Club, annual reports, 1923, 1925	1923-1925
6/10	Launceston Pastoral Association Limited, directors' report, 1917	1917

6/11	National Hall Company Limited, directors' reports, 1921, 1923, 1924, 1927	1921-1927
6/12	North Eastern Co-operative Dairy Co. Ltd, annual balance sheet, 1937, 1938	1937, 1938
6/13	Ringarooma Co-operative Butter, Cheese and Bacon Factory Company Ltd, annual balance sheet, 1922	1922
6/14	Scotch College (Launceston) Limited, prospectus	1924
6/15	Tasmanian Produce and Cool Storage Co-operative Co. Limited, directors' reports, 1917, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1925, 1930	1917-1930
6/16	Tasmanian Wool Growers' Agency Company Limited, annual reports, 1931, 1935, 1937	1931-1937

(W R Rolph was a trustee of J W Pepper's estate and several of the above reports relate to that estate)

### ***7. J W Pepper's Estate***

7/1	James William Pepper's will	1913
7/2	Release of Trustees of J W Pepper's estate	c1939
7/3	Correspondence concerning J W Pepper's estate	1938-1940
7/4	J W Pepper & Son Pty Ltd, billheads	1937-1939
7/5	Share certificates etc relating to J W Pepper's estate: Bank of Van Diemen's Land Limited, 1889, 1890; Bonanza Proprietary, 1906-1908; Broken Hill North Extended, 1906; Central Ringarooma Gold Mining Company, 1900; Colebrook Prospecting Association, 1898, 1907; Great Mount Lyell Copper Company Limited, 1900; Launceston Pastoral Association Limited, 1903, 1904, 1919, 1927; Mount Lyell Reserve Copper and Gold Mines, 1898; Mount Read and Rosebery Mines Limited, 1922; Shepherd & Murphy Tin Mining Co., 1897, 1898, 1899; South Mount Lyell Mining Company Limited, 1900; Tasmanian Copper Company Limited, 1922; Tasmania Gold Mine Limited, 1910, 1916, 1917, 1920	1889-1927

### ***8. Captain F A Hare's Estate***

8/1	Correspondence concerning Captain Hare's estate, includes two letters to Captain Hare	1930-1935
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### ***9. Miscellaneous Items***

9/1	Cruickshank & Creasey (late) Rolph, Young & Cruickshank, estate trustees receipts	1907
9/2	Typed notes concerning the <i>Mercury</i> intrusion into northern Tasmania	c1928
9/3	W R Rolph's desk diaries, 1938, 1939, 1940, 1941, 1942, 1943	1938-1943
9/4	<i>7EX, The Examiner Station, Launceston, Tas.: Souvenir</i> , pamphlet	1938
9/5	W R Rolph and Misses M E and J Rolph trip to Colombo, Singapore, Batavia, Samarang, Sourabaya and Bali, miscellaneous items	1939
9/6	Metal stencil (10 x 8 cms) with ornate "W" and "W.R. Rolph" across the "W"	nd
9/7	Swan Point Estate Subdivision, River Tamar, Tasmania, map <b><i>Oversize item</i></b>	nd

### ***10. Ephemera***

10/1	Christ Church Circle Banquet, program	1911
10/2	Hobart Chamber of Commerce dinner to members of the Empire Press Union, program and menu	1925
10/3	Empire Parliamentary Delegation civic reception, Albert Hall, program	1926
10/4	Examiner Commemoration Social, Public Library Hall, program	1932
10/5	Tasmanian Association (NSW), menu	1934
10/6	Tasmanian Pioneer Celebrations, program	1935
10/7	Pioneer Gathering Celebrations, service of public thanksgiving, Elphin Showgrounds	1935
10/8	Royal Empire Society, annual Empire Day dinner, Brisbane Hotel, menu	1935
10/9	World War 1, postcard showing German raider brought	1916-1918

down in flames, 1916; Beaufort War Hospital, Bristol, where R S Rolph was a patient in 1917, two cards; Christmas card from Prime Minister of Commonwealth of Australia, 1917; Christmas card from *Examiner*, 1918, *Programme of Peace Celebrations Launceston, Tasmania*, 1919

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|-------|--|--------|
| 10/10 | Hand made Christmas card to Mr & Mrs W R Rolph from Nance Jones, C H Jones and Beatrice Woodbridge (includes photos of the Tamar and Gorge suspension bridge)            | 1923   |
| 10/11 | ‘Best Wishes for A Happy Christmas and A Bright New Year’, small card with insert cards, ‘Mr W R Rolph’ and ‘Mrs W R Rolph, with Christmas & New Year Greetings 1924-25’ | 1924   |
| 10/12 | Royal Autocar Club of Tasmania, W R Rolph’s membership card  | 1945   |
| 10/13 | TSS Nairana, postcard  | nd     |
| 10/14 | <i>Launceston Tasmania: Australia’s most beautiful provincial City: where to go and what to see</i> , brochure   | c1930? |

## **Additional Records**

### ***11. Letterbooks***

- |      |   |           |
|------|---|-----------|
| 11/1 | Letterbook, June 1929-December 1931, letters from W R Rolph     | 1929-1931 |
| 11/2 | Letterbook, January 1932-September 1934, letters from W R Rolph | 1932-1934 |

### ***12. Correspondence***

- |      |  |           |
|------|--|-----------|
| 12/1 | Letters to W R Rolph (includes correspondence from Roy Bridges)                      | 1892-1934 |
| 12/2 | Letters etc to W R Rolph from James Rolph, California                                | 1924-1934 |
| 12/3 | Letters etc from W R Rolph   | 1931-1941 |
| 12/4 | W R Rolph, correspondence with A C Walch and E J Rogers re Hobart property mortgages | 1931-1942 |
| 12/5 | Letters to W R Rolph from his son Gordon   | 1932-1940 |
| 12/6 | WR Rolph, correspondence etc re sea voyages in Pacific                               | 1933-1937 |

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|-------|--|-----------|
| 12/7  | Letter to W R Rolph from his son Robert  | 1934      |
| 12/8  | WR Rolph, correspondence, plans, specifications etc re house and land in Elphin Road. See also 15/12   | 1936-1938 |
| 12/9  | Letters to W R Rolph (includes two letters from Dame Enid Lyons and 1940 correspondence re death of H S Blackburn, Manager of <i>Examiner</i> Hobart Office) | 1938-1942 |
| 12/10 | Letter to WR Rolph? from his daughter Dorice   | nd        |

### ***13. Theatre, Concert Programs***

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|------|---|------|
| 13/1 | Beresford Fowler...Company, "Candida", "The Merchant of Venice", National Theatre | nd   |
| 13/2 | Guila Bustabo, National Theatre   | 1938 |
| 13/3 | Douglas Caddy Players, "The Ghost Train", National Theatre                        | nd   |

### ***14. Company Reports***

- |      |  |            |
|------|--|------------|
| 14/1 | Electrolytic Zinc Company of Australia Limited, report of proceedings at AGM | 1939       |
| 14/2 | Herd & Company, annual report and balance sheet                              | 1939, 1940 |
| 14/3 | P O Fysh & Company, report and accounts                                      | 1940       |

### ***15. Miscellaneous Items***

- |      |   |           |
|------|---|-----------|
| 15/1 | <i>Examiner Extraordinary, Arrival of the English Mail</i> Thursday, Sept.12 [1867] (broadsheet)  | 1867      |
| 15/2 | <i>Launceston Examiner</i> , supplement to the <i>Launceston Examiner</i> , 12 <sup>th</sup> March 1892   | 1892      |
| 15/3 | <i>Jubilee of the Launceston Mechanics' Institute</i> , Launceston, 1892 (pamphlet)   | 1892      |
| 15/4 | W R Rolph, paper on Hayden read at Launceston Musical Association, 1908; paper on <i>Vanity Fair</i> , read at Christ Church Circle, 1911; paper on Dickens, read at Australian Amateur Press Association, 1912; paper on Longfellow, nd) | 1908-1912 |
| 15/5 | <i>The Examiner...Almanac 1914</i> , supplement to <i>Examiner</i> , December 1913 <b><i>Oversize item</i></b>  | 1913      |
| 15/6 | <i>The Examiner War Map</i> <b><i>Oversize item</i></b>   | c1915     |

- 15/7 *Daily Telegraph Pty Ltd*, statement of affairs, 1918; balance sheets, 1921-1926; insurance on stock, plant, machinery etc, schedule, 1923; salaries list, 1928 1918-1926
- 15/8 J S Gill, compiler, *Launceston the Northern Capital of Tasmania and Why*, Launceston Fifty Thousand League, c1928 c1928
- 15/9 *The Tasmanian: official organ of the Tasmanian Association (N.S.W.)*, vol. 1, no. 1, September 1932 1932
- 15/10 *Souvenir of Tasmania's Pioneer Festival, Launceston, April 5,6,7, 1935*, Launceston, 1935 1935
- 15/11 *Picturesque Launceston Tasmania: the city and adjacent tourist attractions illustrated by fifty-two photographs taken by S. Spurling*, Launceston, Spurlings, 1930s 193?
- 15/12 A Harold Masters, plan of proposed brick house Elphin Road for Miss Rolph; block plan proposed residence of Miss Rolph Elphin Rd. Launceston Tas **Oversize items** 1937
- 15/13 *The Examiner Special News Bulletin* (one sheet) 1939?
- 15/14 *Centenary Services Christ Church (Congregational) Launceston* (with invitation to Mr W R Rolph to the Centenary Services and Centenary Banquet serviette) 1940
- 15/15 Mavis E Rolph, morandum of agreement re purchase of property at 54 Elphin Road; note re valuation of property 1940
- 15/16 *Tasmanian History at a Glance: the Examiner 1842-1942*, Launceston, 1942 (with introduction by W R Rolph) 1942
- 15/17 Examiner and Weekly Courier Offices, Hobart, an of alterations to premises Collins Street Hobart **Oversize item** nd
- 15/18 'The Acoustics of violin making' (4 handwritten pages) nd
- 15/19 Alex. F. Lithgow, 'Land of the Moa', 'Favourite Successes', sheet music for piano solo nd

## **16.Ephemera**

- 16/1 'A Meeting will he held...18<sup>th</sup> May, 1921,... to form a Northern Branch of The Royal Society of Tasmania, in Launceston (notice, one sheet, W R Rolph's name is on the notice) 1921
- 16/2 The Historical Society of Tasmania, invitation to Mr & Mrs 1935

W R Rolph to attend unveiling of memorial at George Town to commemorate the annexation of VDL by Lieut-Col Paterson

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|------|---|------|
| 16/3 | Christmas cards (from Mr & Mrs E Dwyer Gray, 1939; Davies Brothers, 1939; Public Service Commissioner, 1939; W T Condor, 1 <sup>st</sup> Aust.Corps, A.I.F. Abroad, nd; unsigned card with copy of Eldershaw watercolour of Golf Links, Kingston, on cover, nd) | 1939 |
| 16/4 | 'Staff Luncheon tendered by Mr.W.R.Rolph to mark the Centenary of the Examiner', Brisbane Hotel (menu, includes names of staff and those with the Fighting Forces)  | 1942 |
| 16/5 | Tasmanian Steamers Pty Ltd, T.S.S. Tarooma (4 perforated postcards on a large sheet) <i>Oversize item</i>   | nd   |
| 16/6 | "The Examiner" "Weekly Courier" and "The Saturday Evening Express" letterhead; printed envelope addressed to 'Manager, "Examiner" & "Courier" Branch Offices, 124 Collins Street, Hobart'   | nd   |
| 16/7 | Bridestowe Lavender, Lilydale, Tasmania, advertising folder container sample of lavender and colour photo of Bridestowe lavender harvest time   | nd   |

### ***17. Photographs***

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|------|---|------|
| 17/1 | Photographs (46) of the coronation of George VI, May 1937 | 1937 |
|------|---|------|

### **OTHER SOURCES**

*Australian Dictionary of Biography* vol. 11, article on W R Rolph and G B Rolph

*Cyclopedia of Tasmania*, Hobart, 1931

*Examiner*, 24 January 1948, p. 2 (obituary and tributes, W R Rolph)

Jenny Gill, *Engraved in memory*, Launceston, 1988 (T W Rolph)