

**AUSTRALIAN JOINT COPYING PROJECT**

**SIR DUDLEY DE CHAIR**

**Memoirs , c. 1955**

**Reel M716**

**Commander H.G.D. de Chair  
Maintop  
Felden Lane  
Boxmoor, Hertfordshire**

**National Library of Australia  
State Library of New South Wales**

**Filmed: 1969**

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Sir Dudley Rawson Stratford de Chair (1864-1958) was born in Lennoxville, Canada. His uncle, Admiral Sir Harry Rawson, was Governor of New South Wales in 1902-9. De Chair's family returned to England in 1870 and in 1878 he joined the Royal Navy, becoming a midshipman in 1880. He was promoted to commander in 1897, captain in 1902 and rear admiral in 1912. De Chair married Enid Struben in 1903. In 1915-16 he was commander of the tenth cruiser squadron, which was responsible for the North Sea blockade of Germany. He was knighted in 1916 and promoted to vice admiral in 1917. In 1918 he took command of the coastguard and reserves. He became an admiral in 1920.

De Chair was appointed Governor of New South Wales in October 1923 and he and Lady de Chair arrived in Sydney in February 1924. He faced considerable political difficulties following the election in May 1925 of a Labor Government led by J.T. Lang. Lang's attempts to appoint 25 new members to the Legislative Council, with the ultimate aim of abolishing the Council, were foiled by de Chair, leading to calls from Government supporters for his recall. The tensions between Premier and Governor ended when the Lang Government was defeated at the election in October 1927. The rest of the governorship was mostly uneventful.

De Chair retired in April 1930 and spent most of his later life in London. His autobiography *The Sea is Strong* was published posthumously in 1961.

The papers of Sir Dudley de Chair, including the drafts of his autobiography, are now held in the Imperial War Museum, Lambeth Road, London SE1 6HZ (Documents 7865).

### **Graham de Chair**

Graham De Chair (1905-1995), the son of Sir Dudley de Chair, joined the Royal Navy in 1923 and served on the New Zealand Squadron in 1927-29. He was ADC to his father in 1927-29 and accompanied his parents on their long journey back to England in 1930. His journals covering these four years were also microfilmed by the Australian Joint Copying Project (reel M717).

## SIR DUDLEY DE CHAIR

### Reel M716

#### **Draft of autobiography: volume 6. Australia, 1923-26 (102pp)**

The autobiography of Sir Dudley de Chair, covering his naval career from 1878 to 1917, was edited by his son Seymour de Chair and published under the title *The Sea is Strong* in 1961. The publishers and Seymour de Chair considered that de Chair's memoirs of his later life, including his time as Governor of New South Wales, belonged to a separate book. Up to the present (2017), the two Australian volumes have not been published.

Typescript volume, with manuscript amendments, comprising the following chapters:

- 1 Governor of New South Wales [1923]
- 2 Arrival in Australia [1924]
- 3 Visit to south-west of the State [1924]
- 4 Visit to Special Service Squadron – emigration problems
- 5 Describing some artistic, social and official activities
- 6 Mission from the Hopi tribe of Red Indians – another tour of Never Never Land [1926]
- 7 Lord and Lady Allenby's visit [1925]
- 8 Politics
- 9 More politics

Other topics include the Cocos Islands, Government House, Sydney, domestic staff, life in the outback, sheep stations, a visit to Yass (1924), the Ancient Society of Mariners, speech-making, the Southern Highlands, Dame Nellie Melba, visits of Anna Pavlova, Feodor Chaliapin, Jan Paderewski and Fritz Kreisler, speeches by de Chair and Lady de Chair, surfing and yachting, travels in western New South Wales including Tibooburra and White Cliffs, stories of bushrangers, Australian artists, a visit to Hobart, Australian Aborigines, a visit to an Aboriginal mission at Taree (1926), the attempt by Jack Lang, the Premier, to abolish the Legislative Council (1925-26), moves by Lang to have de Chair recalled, the resignation of the Government, the 1927 election, the question of a possible dismissal of the Premier, and the views of Professor Arthur Berriedale Keith on the New South Wales constitutional crisis. There are a few photographs.

#### **Draft of autobiography: volume 7. Australia, 1926-30 (120pp)**

Typescript volume, with manuscript amendments, comprising the following chapters:

- 1 Visit of the Duke and Duchess of York [1927]
- 2 Visitors to Government House and visit of the Dominions Secretary
- 3 Randwick races
- 4 Amery arrives; my term of office extended [1927]
- 5 Visit to Lord Howe Island [1927]

- 6 A trip to England [1928]
- 7 Return to New South Wales; visit to Broken Hill [1929]
- 8 Pack and leave [1930]
- 9 Bali – some weird native customs
- 10 Sourabaya – Singapore
- 11 Saigon – Angkor – Peking; reminiscences of Christopher Rawson
- 12 Japan – USA
- 13 At home – Empire Day speech – I see the King

Additional subjects include a journey by plane to Wentworth in south-western New South Wales, a visit to Government House in Canberra, the trans-Pacific flight of Charles Kingsford-Smith, a visit to Twofold Bay, visits to Pitcairn Island and New Zealand (1929) and visits to Brisbane and Darwin (1930). There are references to Leo Amery, the Secretary of State for the Dominions, Lord Stonehaven, the Governor-General, James O'Grady, the Governor of Tasmania, and Thomas Bavin, the Premier. The draft includes texts of letters that de Chair received from the Duke and Duchess of York, Lord Cavan, Lord Stamfordham and Leo Amery. There are a few photographs.