

GLAMORGAN RECORD OFFICE/ARCHIFDY MORGANNWG

Reference code: GB 0214 D387

Title: Anthony M. Ernest and Robert M. Ernest of Penarth Papers

Dates : [circa 1928]-2007

Level of description: Fonds

Extent and medium: 0.10 cubic metres; 5 boxes

Name of creator(s): Robert M. Ernest (1904-1991) and Anthony M. Ernest (1936-)

Administrative/biographical history

Robert Monroe Ernest (1904-1991) was born in Cartago, Costa Rica, the son of John Robert Ernest of Dundee and Elizabeth Monroe of Hartlepool, later of Penarth. His father's work as a Master Mariner led him to Costa Rica, where he settled with his family. John established a successful coffee plantation of some 3000 acres, 'Rosemount Estates' in Cartago Province, along with the 'Juan Vinas Concrete Products Co. Ltd', which manufactured concrete paving and kerbstones from imported South Wales Portland cement. John and Elizabeth raised five sons in Costa Rica, and sold their thriving estate to the country's government in 1947.

Robert Monroe Ernest was educated at Westwood College, Penarth, travelling back to Costa Rica by sea for the long summer break. In the early 1930s he purchased the Costa Rica Coffee Co. Ltd., coffee and tea importers and merchants based at 14 Dumfries Place, Cardiff, from his uncle Ralph. The company moved to 1 and 2 Great Western Approach sometime around 1938. This allowed for expansion in response to trade with UK hotels and restaurants, in particular the Italian owned cafes of the south Wales valleys. The company purchased coffee from the family estate along with most of the principal coffee producing countries of the world. During the Second World War it supplied coffees and teas to the Armed Forces and the ship stores victuallers based in Cardiff Docks and beyond.

In 1950, the Costa Rica Coffee Co. Ltd. purchased premises at Caribbean House, 62 St. Mary's Street, Cardiff, the former offices of Rhymney Brewery Ltd. In 1981, the business was sold to the Avana Bakery Co. of Cardiff. Robert became a consultant to Avana, and retired a year or so later.

Robert Ernest was appointed Honorary Consul for Costa Rica in Cardiff and Bristol in the early 1930s, and was Dean of the Cardiff Consular Corps in later years. Living in Penarth, he joined the Penarth Operatic and Dramatic Society in 1931/2, becoming its Stage Director and later Chairman.

During the Second World War he was instrumental in staging concerts for troops billeted in Penarth at the St. Augustine's church Institute and Marina Pavilion on Penarth Pier. He was a founder member of the Penarth Civic Society, becoming Chairman and then Vice-President under James Callaghan MP.

Robert Ernest was a founding member of the Orbit Theatre Company, Cardiff. The company's aim was to stage more challenging productions than those tackled by other similar societies, along with running drama workshops for aspiring actors at their premises in Mill Lane. He was awarded the National Operatic and Dramatic Association's medal for 50 years service to the stage, and became Chairman and President of the Orbit Theatre Company in later years. In 1951, he stage directed a major pageant at Penarth Athletic Field to celebrate the Festival of Britain in south Glamorgan.

Robert was a keen sailor and part owner from 1947 of an Uffa Fox designed 'Firefly' yacht 'Mayfly' F.303. He served as Vice Commodore of Penarth Yacht Club and was subsequently made a Life Member. Robert married Joan Schroeter in 1934, whose own father was engaged in timber importing into Cardiff, and had a son and two daughters. He died at Sully Hospital.

Robert's son, County Councillor Anthony M. Ernest, was born in Penarth in 1936. He received his education at Westbourne House, Penarth; Perrott Hill, Crewkerne, Somerset, and St. Edward's School, Oxford. He spent his period of National Service, 1955-1957, with the Royal Corps of Signals in Cyprus, during the EOKA (National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters) terrorism campaign. On his return to the UK, he worked as a coffee merchant at the family business the Costa Rica Coffee Co. Ltd. In 1964 he became Tobacco Sales and Marketing Executive for John Player and Sons. He took early retirement in 1988.

Anthony Ernest entered local politics as a Conservative in 1958 in Penarth. He was elected to Penarth Town Council in 1974, serving as Mayor in 1980/1. He was elected to the Vale of Glamorgan Borough Council in 1979 in Penarth where he served as Chairman of the Leisure Services Committee during the late 1980s and early 1990s and Deputy Mayor, 1994/5. As County Councillor for the Vale of Glamorgan County Council he served as Vice Chairman, 1999; as 'Millennium Year' Chairman, 2000/1, and has been a Cabinet member since 2004 more recently in the Sully Ward. Councillor Ernest was also an elected member for South Glamorgan County Council, 1993-1996 for the Dinas Powys South Ward.

Since 2004, Councillor Ernest has been a member of the South Wales Fire Authority becoming Chairman in 2008. He is a Panel Chairman of the South Wales Valuation Tribunal and was the Vale of Glamorgan representative on the Postwatch consumer focus group for Cardiff and the Vale until disbanded in 2008, and Vice Chairman of the Vale of Glamorgan Best Kept Village Committee. He was appointed to the Glamorgan Archives Joint Committee in 2008.

Anthony Ernest was the founder Chairman of the Penarth RNLI (Royal National Lifeboat Institution) Station Committee, serving from 1980-1994. He is a Life Member of Penarth Yacht Club; Vice President of the Penarth Society (formerly the Penarth Civic Society); a member of the Barry Amateur Radio Society and the Radio Society of Great Britain, and a member of the Tourism Society. He has been active in the tourism industry for over 20 years. He has been an amateur radio licensee since 1955. He is married to Gaynor, and has two sons and two daughters.

A full biographical history can be found amongst the archive.

Archival history

Records held by R.M. Ernest and A.M. Ernest until deposit in the Record Office.

Immediate source of acquisition

Deposited in the Glamorgan Record Office by a private individual on 12 August 2005 and 17 Oct 2008

Scope and content

Papers created, collected and received by Anthony M. Ernest (b. 1936) and his father, Robert M. Ernest (1904-1991). Including material relating to Penarth RNLI station, Penarth Yacht Club and Penarth Civic Society; Penarth Operatic Society programmes; Penarth Holiday Festival programmes; papers re Sully Hospital; papers relating to the yacht 'Firefly'; deeds and papers relating to properties in Bridgeman Road and Park Road, Penarth; telephone directories for South Wales (1952 and 1957); 'Reef Knot', the house magazine of the South American Saint Line; tourist map of Costa Rica; biographical notes on Robert M. Ernest and Anthony M. Ernest.

Appraisal, destruction and scheduling information

All records which meet the collection policy of the Glamorgan Record Office have been retained.

Accruals

Accruals are possible

Conditions governing access

Items containing information on named individuals may be restricted in accordance with the Data Protection Act and Record Office policy

Conditions governing reproduction

Normal Glamorgan Record Office conditions apply.

Language/scripts of material

English

Physical characteristics and technical requirements

Fair condition

Archivist's note

Compiled by Rosemary Boyns for the Glamorgan Record Office, with reference to information supplied by the depositor.

Rules or conventions

This description follows Glamorgan Record Office guidelines based on ISAD(G) compatible cataloguing guidelines for fonds level descriptions used by the Archives Network Wales.

Date of description

15 August 2005; revised 8 September 2005, October 2008

A.M Ernest and R.M. Ernest Papers

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[Ref no]

[Scope and content]

[Dates]

[Extent and medium]