



Public Record Office
of Northern Ireland

INTRODUCTION

CAMPBELL PAPERS

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Campbell Papers (D4122)

Table of Contents

Summary	2
Background.....	3

Summary

The Arthur Campbell archive consists of approximately 500 documents, 1500 photographs and 2500 newspaper cuttings, c.1925-1990, deriving from Arthur Campbell of Belfast (1909-1994). The papers include 286 letters and cards to Arthur Campbell and Gretta Bowen (his mother) relating to exhibitions, the Youth Hostel Association of Northern Ireland, Harry Ferguson (Motors) Ltd., and advertising. One particular highlight amongst the correspondence is a 100th birthday card from Queen Elizabeth II to Gretta Bowen. The major strength of the archive lies in the unique collection of 1500 photographs taken by Arthur Campbell and depicting street scenes in Belfast, Irish Youth Hostels, landscapes and car shows. Also present are a number of draft advertisements designed by Arthur Campbell for Harry Ferguson (Motors) and a number of Youth Hostel Association of Northern Ireland handbooks of the period 1933-1953.



Background

Arthur Campbell was both photographer and painter. The son of Gretta Bowen (1880-1981) from Dublin and brother of painter, George Campbell of Arklow (1917-1919), and writer W. Stanley Campbell. He was born in Belfast on 9 November 1909. He was educated in Dublin and Arklow, 1914-1921; Belfast, 1921-1925; Belfast College of Art and College of Technology (evenings) until 1932. In 1925 after the death of his father, he joined the creative department of Belfast Printing Company. He later joined Harry Ferguson (Motors) Ltd. (now Charles Hurst), where he was head of press relations and design, 1953-1979.

Arthur Campbell was active as a writer and photographer from 1936 and participated in exhibitions during the late forties and early fifties. The Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (precursor of the Arts Council) organised a one-man show for him in 1951. He published a series of articles about Belfast, the Ulster countryside and Donegal, illustrating them himself; was successful in a competition to design the 1961 London Motor show poster; participated in a painting discussion on BBC radio; and exhibited occasionally in the Royal Hibernian Academy and Oireachtas exhibitions. His photographs were published in The Observer, Photography, The Irish Times and other journals, and he helped illustrate several books. His paintings were purchased by the Ulster Museum and the Arts Council for their collections. Friar's Bush Press published books of his photographs entitled 'Return Journey' (1987) and 'Looking Back' (1989). Never a prolific artist, he drew only in his spare time and experimented in the speedier media of pastel or wax. His list of interests and hobbies was immense and included the Youth Hostel Association and classic cars.

