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IREDALE, ROBERT WILSON (BOB) (1913–1994), air force officer and sales executive, was born on 31 March 1913 at Castlemaine, Victoria, eldest of three children of Victorian-born parents Herbert Henry Iredale, painter, and his wife Elizabeth, née McBeath. Raised in Melbourne, Bob attended Melbourne High School before working as a clerk. An enthusiastic sportsman, he played club-level tennis and was invited to represent Victoria. In the mid-1930s he moved to New Guinea, working for the Vacuum Oil Co. Pty Ltd at Lae and Rabaul. Returning in 1938, he was the company's sales manager at Horsham, western Victoria, where he competed in tennis, was a member of the Horsham Football Club committee, and took an interest in horse racing. A keen motorist, he had a 'miraculous' (*Horsham Times* 1939, 4) escape from a car crash in 1939.

In May 1940 Iredale volunteered for the Empire Air Training Scheme, enlisting in the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) in September. He commenced pilot training at Narrandera, New South Wales, before sailing for Canada in January 1941. Awarded his wings and commissioned in May, he proceeded to Britain for advanced training. In September he was posted to No. 114 Squadron, Royal Air Force (RAF), flying Blenheim light bombers on night-time intruder missions, reconnoitring and attacking night fighter airfields. Renowned for his daring and tactical skill, he was promoted to acting flight lieutenant in January 1942 (substantive May 1943), and then acting squadron leader in command of a flight in March 1942 (substantive July 1944). He had married Doris 'Pat' Myers on 11 February 1942 at the parish church at Fakenham, Norfolk. In July that year his aircraft was caught in searchlights and targeted by anti-aircraft guns, but, showing 'great courage and determination' (NAA A9300), he pressed home his attack against an airfield, earning the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Posted to the recently formed No. 464 Squadron, RAAF, as a flight commander in September 1942, three weeks later Iredale was posted as an instructor at No. 13 Operational Training Unit. Returning to the squadron in October 1943, in January 1944

he was promoted to acting wing commander (substantive in June) and appointed as commanding officer, flying Mosquito light bombers. He was mentioned in despatches (1944). On 18 February he participated in Operation Jericho, attacking a Gestapo prison at Amiens, France, with the aim of breaching the walls to enable Resistance members to escape. He later received that country's Croix de Guerre avec Palme (1947). Energetic and immensely popular, he flew numerous intruder sorties, mainly against airfields, as well as bombing and strafing railways, roads, bridges, and supply dumps in support of the Allied landing at Normandy. Completing his second tour and leaving the squadron in June, he was awarded a Bar to the DFC for 'fine fighting spirit and eagerness for action', having 'raised the morale of his squadron to a very high level' (NAA A9300).

From 1 February 1945 Iredale commanded No. 140 Wing, RAF, that same month raiding the Gestapo headquarters in Copenhagen. Arriving home with his family in November 1945, he was demobilised on 5 February 1946. He returned to the Vacuum Oil Company. Moving to England, he managed a hotel at Norwich, before rejoining Vacuum (later Mobil Oil Australia Ltd) in 1954 in Melbourne. The following year he was made assistant sales manager in Victoria. After becoming marketing manager for Australia, he retired in 1975. His wife had died in 1968, a year after their youngest son served as a national serviceman in Vietnam. By 1977 he had married Dorothy May Peacock at Mt Eliza, the couple retiring to Mornington. He sustained friendships with former comrades, particularly of No. 464 Squadron, and in 1993 he became a member of the Mosquito Aircraft Association of Australia. By this time, his health was declining due to cancer, and he was too ill to take part in events organised for the fiftieth anniversary of the Amiens raid in February 1994. He died on 17 June that year at Mornington, survived by his wife and the two sons of his first marriage, and was cremated.

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JOHN MOREMON

IRISH, SIR RONALD ARTHUR

(1913–1993), accountant and company director, was born on 26 March 1913 at Dulwich Hill, Sydney, son of New South Wales-born parents Arthur Edward Irish, customs clerk, and his wife Florence Abbott, née Hales. Ronald attended Homebush Public and Fort Street Boys’ High schools. After training with A. S. White [q.v.16] and Fox and then C. W. Stirling & Co., he qualified as a chartered accountant in 1934, and the same year became a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia (ICAA).

In 1935 Irish set up his own practice. On 16 May 1936 in the Stanmore Baptist Church he married Ruth Theodora Aylward, a stenographer. He formed R. A. Irish and Michelmore in 1940. The firm absorbed other partnerships, regional and interstate, until 1969, when it joined with a Melbourne-based entity, Young and Outhwaite. Irish was senior partner in Irish Young and Outhwaite until 1980, when it became part of Deloitte Haskins and Sells. He had been president of the Institute of Registered Tax Agents in the mid-1940s, a member of the executive council of the Taxpayers Association of New South Wales in the same decade, and president of the ICAA from 1956 to 1958. Together with Ray Chambers in the 1950s he generated a structure for accounting degrees that was taken up by the University of Sydney and the ICAA. A life member of the Australian Society of Accountants (1972) and the ICAA (1974), in 1972 he chaired the Tenth International Congress of Accountants, which convened in Sydney.

From the beginning Irish had offered himself as an authority in his profession. In 1935 he addressed a national meeting of accountancy students on the skills required to

report on the new phenomenon of holding companies, with their many subsidiaries. That same year his first book appeared, *Practical Auditing*; it went into second (1938) and third (1942) expanded editions because it met a need to understand the transformation taking place in corporate structures. He joined two barristers, P. H. Allen and R. G. Reynolds, to produce *Australian Executorship Law and Accounts* (1942). Irish’s *Auditing Theory and Practice* appeared in 1948, and *Auditing for Students* in 1952. His magisterial work, *Auditing*, came out in 1957. By its fourth edition (1972) an editorial committee of fifteen leading practitioners was listed on the title page, but their names were subordinate to ‘Sir Ronald Irish’ as the author and arbiter of the volume, and ‘Irish’ remained on the book’s spine.

By the early 1940s Irish had entered corporate life through company secretaryships in the media empire assembled by the late Sir Hugh Denison [q.v.8], particularly with radio station 2GB in Sydney and with the nationwide network, Macquarie Broadcasting Services Pty Ltd. Associated Newspapers Ltd was Denison’s flagship. Irish joined its board in 1950. Its main assets were an afternoon Sydney tabloid, the *Sun* and the *Sunday Sun and Guardian*, and Sungravure Ltd, an up-to-date printing establishment. He took part in negotiations during the firm’s swift and sought-after takeover in 1953 by John Fairfax & Sons [qq.v.4,8] Pty Ltd, in the teeth of outraged opposition by (Sir) Frank Packer [q.v.15], a rival bidder. He remained a director of Associated Newspapers and of Sungravure under the new owner.

The *Sun*’s competitor in Sydney’s afternoon market was the *Daily Mirror*, one of Ezra Norton’s [q.v.15] papers. He also owned the *Sunday Mirror* and the *Sportsman* in Sydney and *Truth*, separate editions of which appeared weekly in four other States. Norton put his papers up for sale in 1958. Again wishing to freeze Packer out, Fairfax set Irish up as chairman of a shelf company, O’Connell Pty Ltd, which made the purchase. Irish became chairman of *Truth* and *Sportsman* Ltd, which changed its name to *Mirror Newspapers Ltd* in 1959, and was sold to Rupert Murdoch in 1960.

Irish chaired Rothmans of Pall Mall (Aust) Ltd from the Anglo-South African tobacco company's entry into Australia in 1955 until his retirement in 1981. He was chief executive between 1955 and 1974. The factory at Granville, New South Wales, was in production within a year, and Rothmans soon held a third of the national market for cigarettes. Its Winfield brand sponsored rugby league in New South Wales; television advertisements for the product made Paul Hogan a celebrity. The company had donated £20,000 to the British Empire and Commonwealth Games held in Perth in 1962, and had given cigarettes to the athletes. It cemented its reputation through the Rothmans National Sport Foundation, which employed prominent former competitors and sponsored a wide range of sporting activities to associate smoking with manliness and health.

Tirelessly, Irish attacked what he saw as biased medical research into the consequences of a habit that was pleasurable and 'part of the social scene' (*Sydney Morning Herald* 23 September 1969, 1). Smoking, he suggested, was to be preferred to 'a tragic and alarming increase in drug-taking', which he claimed coincided with 'the surge of anti-smoking propaganda' (*Sydney Morning Herald* 6 October 1969, 16). By the early 1970s he was also challenged to explain Rothmans' business and sporting contacts with South Africa.

Other Australian subsidiaries of British industrial firms also invited Irish on to their boards. He chaired one of them, Babcock & Wilcox (Aust) Pty Ltd, for a while in the early 1960s. In the 1970s he chaired International Cellars Australia Pty Ltd, a subsidiary of Rothmans' overseas parent company, whose major Australian acquisitions were Hungerford Hill Vineyards Pty Ltd and Walter Reynell [q.v.6] & Sons Wines Pty Ltd. An aggressive British conglomerate, the Wood Hall Trust, bought the Hornibrook [q.v.14] group, an Australian civil engineering firm, in 1964, assembling it with other companies into an entity called Wood Hall (Aust) Pty Ltd, on whose board Irish sat from 1965 to 1981. In 1958 the Federal government had appointed him to the Manufacturing Industries Advisory Council, which he chaired from 1966 until the end of his tenure in 1972. He was a company investigator for the Commonwealth and New

South Wales governments. For some years he was also a major fundraiser for the Federal Liberal Party of Australia.

From 1959 Irish was chairman of Anthony Hordern & Sons [q.v.4] Ltd, a department store at Brickfield Hill, Sydney. After business declined from the 1960s, the board decided to abandon retailing, demolish the store, and open the massive site to high-rise development. By the 1980s Irish chaired Brickfield Hill Properties Pty Ltd and its successor, World Square Pty Ltd.

Appointed OBE in 1963, Irish was knighted in 1970. In 1986 he was made an honorary fellow of the University of Sydney. His first marriage having been dissolved in 1959, on 12 February 1960 he married Noella Jean Austin (Jeannie) Fraser, a secretary, in the Cronulla Presbyterian Church. Sir Ronald died on 12 July 1993 at Elizabeth Bay, survived by his wife and the three sons from his first marriage; he was cremated. In 2015 he was inducted into the Australian Accounting Hall of Fame.

Charter. 'Sir Ronald Irish, OBE.' 64, no. 9 (October 1993): 10; Irish, Sir Ronald. 'Sir Ronald Irish, O.B.E., F.C.A.' *Fortian* 68 (December 1970): 35–36; *Sydney Morning Herald*. 'Most Not Harmed by Smoking, Says Mr Irish.' 23 September 1969, 1, 'Journal Attacks Smoking Defence.' 6 October 1969, 16; University of Melbourne. Centre for Accounting and Industry Partnerships. 2015 Australian Accounting Hall of Fame Dinner and Awards Ceremony commemorative booklet. Copy held on *ADB* file.

BARRIE DYSTER

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