JAMES GLEESON INTERVIEWS: DOUGLAS DUNDAS

10 August 1978

JAMES GLEESON: Doug, I think we might reverse the program this time and start with the individual works to talk about and then go on to biographical details later.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes, good.

JAMES GLEESON: Would you like to tell me about *The wood heap*, which seems to be one of the earlier ones in our collection?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes. Have you got a date on it? I think it was 1939.

JAMES GLEESON: All we know is that it was presented to us by Mrs Casey in 1944, but I do think we have a date for 1939.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes. Well, in my summer vacation from the tech, I at that time used to go up and see my sister who lived at Inverell. It wasn't very spectacular landscape but there was a lot of intimate stuff that I liked, particularly the wood heap just outside the house which presented a challenge, I thought, at that particular time. I can't tell you very much about the actual painting of it. I did it on the spot naturally, and must have spent some time on it too by the look of it. It seems to me to have been very detailed and I guess I spent a good deal of time, probably at the same time every morning for two or three mornings probably. We went to Melbourne at the end of 1939–40 and stayed with Basil Burdett in Alcaston House in Melbourne. At least we didn't stay with him but we had the use of his flat during the day. I took that over, among some other things, because Basil had got me a commission to paint one or two things on Sir Keith Murdoch's country property at Frankston. While we were staying down there, Mrs Casey saw this, got very excited about it, and decided to buy it. Just at that time, Dick Casey was appointed the first Australian Ambassador to the United States. They took it over and hung it in the embassy over there. When we were in the embassy, staying when the Beale's were there in 1963, it was on the walls of the embassy in Washington.

JAMES GLEESON: I see.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: So that was a bit of a reminder of the old days.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes. It's come to us–it was presented by Mrs Casey–in 1944.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: I see. Well, then I would think that she must have presented it to the embassy over there and that's how it comes to be in the

national collection. I suppose I should call her Lady Casey now; she was Mrs Casey then. Yes.

JAMES GLEESON: Doug, in some ways it seems to be different in character to some of your later paintings. It has a sharpness of detail about it that puts me in mind a little bit of, oh, that English painter—

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Stanley Spencer.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes, and I was wondering if you had been aware of his work at that time.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Oh yes, I was. I've always been, you know, a great admirer of Stanley Spencer, to his particular way. The sequence of influences in my work I think is a bit hard to follow now at this distance, but there was a time when I was very interested when the gallery here had purchased the Camille Pissarro painting of the—I've forgotten the name of it. That influenced me quite a bit. I think, although it sounds a bit incongruous, that must have been somewhere about this time, but I just can't be sure of the actual sequence of these influences.

JAMES GLEESON: No, no.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: I never followed Stanley Spencer very closely but I think that one is, more than any other that I've done, somewhat influenced by Stanley Spencer.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes, it's only just a hint in the clarity of the form and the searching out of individual parts of each form.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes, that would be right.

JAMES GLEESON: Well now, Doug, the next one on the list is *Canberra cloud.* We don't have a photograph of it because it's now in Australia House in London, but I know you painted a lot of paintings in Canberra at one period. Can you tell us about that?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes. From the time that we were in Melbourne in early 1940 we came back and saw for the first time the landscape around Canberra, and we stayed there for a night or two. I think we went there particularly at the time to visit Jean Appleton who was teaching at the girl's school there. We were so enamoured of the landscape that we decided to go back there in each summer holiday for a time. At first we stayed in a collection of cabins in the camping ground just near the Molonglo, behind where the hospital now is. Later we had the use of a house which Dr Allan, Dr L H Allan, lived in at Acton. Now, Acton was a very happy hunting ground because on the one side one looked out toward the mountains of Tidbinbilla, across the racecourse which is now part of the lake, and on the other side one looked back toward Queanbeyan. Now, the

Canberra cloud, which we haven't got reference for here but I think I can recollect it, was one of those looking over the expanse of the racecourse as it then was, beautiful middle distance over Yarralumla.

JAMES GLEESON: Ah, yes.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: And then on to Tidbinbilla. I did a number of things there under varying conditions and, if I'm correct, I think this one—there were two or three. One, I think, was called *Summer weather*. *Canberra cloud* I can't quite identify, but that's where it was painted and that would be from the Acton Hill, near where the university is now, and the scene of a great number of my Canberra paintings.

JAMES GLEESON: Well, it's good to find some of these. Here is *Morning on Black Mountain*.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Oh, *Morning on Black Mountain*, yes. Well now, that was just down the hillside looking toward, well, Black Mountain obviously, but over here is the panorama towards Tidbinbilla that I think entered into *Canberra cloud*.

JAMES GLEESON: That is on the left to this?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: On the left, just easing into it there. That, in fact, was just across the street in front of Dr Allan's house. You can imagine from this that it was a very fruitful place for outdoor painting. This one, I think, was bought by Dr and Mrs Evatt when they were buying some things for the Foreign Affairs. I'm not sure about this but I think so. Now, what else can I tell you about it? I think it more or less tells you everything I'd want to tell you by just looking at it. Of course, now Black Mountain has the—

JAMES GLEESON: Television—

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Television aerials up there.

JAMES GLEESON: Up at the top, yes. This part on the right, is that anywhere near the present university site.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes, I think that would be the fringe of pines–I don't know whether they're still there–but the university would be just over to the right here.

JAMES GLEESON: Good. Well, we'll continue with the Canberra ones. Apparently it was a source of great interest to you and an inspiration. This is *The Molonglo River*.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes. This one I can't remember painting at all, but I know where it is. It's just on a bend of the Molonglo, and I think the spur that runs out from Black Mountain is here.

JAMES GLEESON: On the right?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: On the right. Those would be the Queanbeyan Hills, I think, but I'm not quite sure of this. I'm very vague about this one. My son Kerry says he remembers going out there when I was painting it, but I just don't know. The Molonglo is very spectacular at that point, you know, the bends in it are quite marvellous and the growths along the side.

JAMES GLEESON: Is that anywhere near where that Dairy Flat Bridge goes over the Molonglo?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Dairy Flat? I don't know. I just don't know.

JAMES GLEESON: Out towards Fyshwick?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: No. That's in the opposite direction from this. This is out, I would say, it's on the western side of Canberra.

JAMES GLEESON: I see. It would be an area now under water?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Under water, I'm sure, yes. But these pieces, these clusters of vegetation there, puzzle me a bit. I just can't recall this at all. Except that from up on the spur, the bare spur which runs out–and I think is still above water level from the Black Mountain–I painted another one from up on the top of it which the then American Ambassador to Australia—what was his name?

DOROTHY: Amos Peaslee.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Amos Peaslee bought and took back to America and we saw it in his house when we visited them when we were in America. It had just brought in some of the government buildings, and probably Parliament House up here. You know, what are they, the administrative buildings?

JAMES GLEESON: Oh yes, yes. We've got a date of 1949 for that. Would that be correct?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: That would be correct yes.

JAMES GLEESON: At one stage it was hanging in the Bangkok Embassy.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Oh, was it? I didn't know that.

JAMES GLEESON: It's been travelling.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: It would have been one of the ones that I think Will Ashton when he was president of the acquisitions or whatever–Commonwealth Advisory Committee–would have bought. He and—there were two or three of them weren't there?

JAMES GLEESON: Yes, yes.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes.

JAMES GLEESON: Good. Well now, oh, here's another—

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: *Goobragandra Valley*. Mr Justice Nicolas, who has since died, arranged that we–my wife and I–should go up to his son's property in the Goobragandra Valley which is upstream from Tumut; very hilly and beautiful country. From there I painted this one which shows the Nicolas' house down there. Patrick Nicolas was afterwards I think President of the Grazier's Association, or some of these bodies which deal with the landed gentry in the country. But it was very steep, as you can see from the distant hills, and I was painting this on a slope which was so steep that when he came up to collect us in his Land-Rover one almost felt the vehicle would tip over on the hillside. It was so very steep country. At the time there were men there working, extracting eucalyptus oil from the trees which were cut down. What were they? Mountain? Sorry, there's a name for the tall trees from which they were extracting the eucalyptus oil. It was a very remote place and this road that we see here winds down toward Tumut, and I think Blowering Dam is somewhere down behind those hills now. They were just in the process of working on Blowering Dam when we were there.

JAMES GLEESON: Well then, Doug, in that case the date we've got on it, 1936, can't be right because I don't think they were working on Blowering Dam.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Oh dear, no. Is that the date you've got on it?

JAMES GLEESON: Well, we've got it on our card, but I've always wondered about it. Would perhaps '56 be more accurate? Perhaps they've interpreted the 3.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: I don't think it would be as late as '56. I'm not sure about this because things are beginning to get vague in my memory about the background.

JAMES GLEESON: But '36 is definitely wrong.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Definitely wrong. On the other hand, I would doubt whether it would be as late as '56.

JAMES GLEESON: Forty-six?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: It could be.

JAMES GLEESON: There is some sort of date there, cut off by—

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Something just missing.

DOROTHY: I think you're right James.

JAMES GLEESON: It could be '46?

DOROTHY: I think so.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: I think that would be about it, yes. Put a query after it but certainly it's—

JAMES GLEESON: It may be revealed once the frame is taken off.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: That's right. Yes, yes.

JAMES GLEESON: It's cut off by the frame.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes.

JAMES GLEESON: But I didn't think '36 would be a correct date for it.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: No.

DOROTHY: (inaudible) little boy and they were practising all this stuff (inaudible).

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Rather amusing little story, if I can introduce it here. The young family of the Nicholas' they were just growing up and the little boy used to come up and sit by me as I was painting. He said one day, 'I think I'll write to my cousins and advise them that we're not going to become engine drivers, we're going to be artists'.

JAMES GLEESON: He's interested and fascinated by the work.

DOROTHY: (inaudible)

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes, well now.

JAMES GLEESON: *Summer landscape.*

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: *Summer landscape.* This is on the other side of the hill from the western view over toward Tidbinbilla. You know, between Civic and Acton the road curves around there. I suppose it still does.

JAMES GLEESON: I think so.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: This was a flat which would now be covered by the waters of the lake. It was fascinating because the growths at different times of the year governed the colour. I just don't remember painting this one but I know where it is. I can see quite clearly where it is. I would think that just behind me was either the Institute of Anatomy or–what is it of sciences?–the Academy of Sciences.

JAMES GLEESON: Oh yes, yes.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: These respective rows would have been where at some time it must have been farmed, but mostly it was just grazing land and horses and cattle used to graze there. I would think that the Commonwealth Bridge is somewhere over here.

JAMES GLEESON: To the left. Yes, yes.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: I was always fascinated by the skies in Canberra. You've got such lovely skies.

JAMES GLEESON: I notice you do make a feature of that in all these landscapes.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes, quite so. It's all, or was then, also spacious and I guess it still is. I haven't seen it for years now. Am I speaking up enough?

JAMES GLEESON: I think so. Is that coming through?

MALE SPEAKER: Yes.

JAMES GLEESON: I think I mentioned before, Doug, that there were several we don't have photographs of at the moment because they are in overseas posts. There's one in The Hague Embassy at the moment called *The harbour at noon*.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes, I remember that one very well. I was just looking yesterday at a landscape of Conrad Martens which is from exactly the same position called *Sydney Harbour from Vaucluse Heights.*

JAMES GLEESON: Oh yes, yes.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: This was painted just by the roadside which leads around toward The Gap, looking across the harbour toward Manly. At that time, I think, I was a little bit interested in broken colour and there's a good deal of, you know, broken colour throughout it and rather light in key. I was rather fond of this picture. But I made the mistake of submitting it to the society in an unfinished state before I had completed it.

JAMES GLEESON: The Society of Artists?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: The Society of Artists, yes.

JAMES GLEESON: What date was that, Doug? Can you remember?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: I would say it'd be about 1943. I'm not sure. You haven't got a date?

JAMES GLEESON: No, I haven't got a date for it.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: No. It's at The Hague now, is it?

JAMES GLEESON: Yes.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes. A theme of light mainly, I'd say, and broken colour.

JAMES GLEESON: I recall a view–I think it's in the Sydney Gallery–by Von Guerard looking from Vaucluse across towards Manly. Is it at all that same view?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: It would be I would say, yes.

DOROTHY: Bottle and Glass.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: The Bottle and Glass Point which was clearly shown in this one of Conrad Martens. I think somebody put a charge of dynamite into it and blew it up a few years ago.

JAMES GLEESON: Good lord.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: I'm not sure.

DOROTHY: (inaudible) from Vaucluse Bay.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes. It sort of encloses Vaucluse Bay.

JAMES GLEESON: It looks more towards the north.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: More towards the north. In fact, if I remember rightly, the glint of the sun, although it's *Harbour at noon* the sun must have been pretty high. There is a reflection or a glitter of water, you know, coming fairly prominently into the picture.

JAMES GLEESON: I can't remember. I don't think I've ever seen this painting. But certainly it sounds like the same point of view that Von Guerard's used in that painting.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes, could be.

JAMES GLEESON: It must be a famous position for artists.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes, I don't know that one. Is it in the gallery?

JAMES GLEESON: I think it's in the Sydney Gallery. How recently it's been acquired, I don't know. I saw another version of it in Melbourne, which I don't think is probably by Von Guerard but is certainly a copy of (inaudible).

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: I see. Yes, yes.

JAMES GLEESON: It's the same view.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Same view. Yes. Actually, it looks over the grounds of Vaucluse House. It's done from up on the road leading around and looks down on the grounds of Vaucluse House.

JAMES GLEESON: Another one we don't have a photograph of is called *The white house.*

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Oh yes. That was painted in Canberra on one of the periods when we went down there during the summer. At that time the white house was occupied by the drafting section of the public works, I think it is. I don't know whether it's still there. But it was just about opposite—somewhere near the hospital anyway.

JAMES GLEESON: I see.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: I was rather interested in the abstract shapes that the house created with its roof and the divisions, sort of geometric divisions which actually look quite like the house, but there was a sort of abstract compositional quality in it.

JAMES GLEESON: How long did you go down to Canberra for? How many years were you going down (inaudible)?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Oh, I would think at least 15.

JAMES GLEESON: I see.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Nineteen forty; 1941 would have been our first period when we stayed there. Yes, I think the forties and early fifties, somewhere about 12 to 15 years I would think.

JAMES GLEESON: This was when you were teaching at the East—

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: I was teaching at East Sydney Tech.

JAMES GLEESON: And your summer holidays—

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Summer holidays were long enough to provide me with practically the only painting I did in that time, except something perhaps in the studio. But I always felt that I was just getting into form painting when I had to come back and tackle the job of programming and enrolling.

JAMES GLEESON: It's never long enough these holidays. Now, to a very important work in our collection, the portrait of Dorothy. Is the correct title *Portrait of the artist's wife?*

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes, that's correct. Yes.

JAMES GLEESON: Nineteen forty-two to ’44.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: That would be right, I think. This one, and one which has recently been purchased by the New South Wales Gallery, were a sort of sequence. This is the second one. I was painting directly from Dorothy on the first one, and somehow or other I must have become discouraged with the scheme or something. I put it aside and took a blank canvas. I think that’s on board, prepared masonite.

JAMES GLEESON: On masonite, that’s right, it is.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes, it’s on prepared masonite. It was exactly the same size as I’d been painting, and this I painted entirely without her on the spot, working into a kind of colour scheme in which the flesh was rather more golden or yellowish than in the other one; less factual in terms of flesh tones, at any rate. Here I think I must have been influenced by what Bill Dobell was doing at the time, you know, where he used to see something that interested him and paint a picture from it without the—

JAMES GLEESON: Model in front of him.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Without the model in front of him. So this was an experiment in that direction. The other one was carried to a point of fairly conclusive point in paint down to about the lower six inches. But after I’d painted this I took it up again and worked in the nocturnal view of the harbour behind with reflected lights coming in to the water.

JAMES GLEESON: That’s the first version?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: The first version. That part of the first version was from imagination too.

JAMES GLEESON: I see.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Then latterly, just before my recent show, I saw the possibilities of it. I began to like it better as a more sympathetic painting of Dorothy than perhaps this–although I’ve always liked this–and I completed this lower part.

JAMES GLEESON: So that when you did this one, the first version had no background and the lower part hadn’t been completed?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: That’s right. This was stained in.

JAMES GLEESON: I see.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Wynne turps–in a condition that people who are not artists can never seem to separate from the final work. Don’t touch it sort of thing.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes. So it really has complicated history because the other one came first as far as the figure goes, but didn't have the background or the foreground completely evolved.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: No.

JAMES GLEESON: Then you did this from memory.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes.

JAMES GLEESON: That, I think, accounts for perhaps its freer kind of handling.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes, I think so.

JAMES GLEESON: Then at a later stage, how much later Doug, did you take up the—

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Oh, well, what's the date of this? Forty-two, '44, is it? Well, '78.

JAMES GLEESON: Oh, as late as that?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes, just this lower part. The other part went into three stages really. There was the figure and, you know, the hat and all this.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes, yes.

DOROTHY: All stained in, of course.

JAMES GLEESON: All stain in, yes, yes.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes, all stained in. Then I painted the background, very shortly after doing this, and then this was done 20 years later.

JAMES GLEESON: It's got a history.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Don't get me wrong. This was quite spontaneous and completed.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes, it looks like it.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Completed, you know, at that time. It's the other one I'm talking about.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes, I know. Interesting, I think that's quite unusual. Ah, that's the view of Vaucluse from which you painted *The harbour at noon*, the same scene.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: No, this is not it.

JAMES GLEESON: Isn't it?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: There's another one I have which is, I don't know whether it's in Brian's book but it might have been the photographs that Cedric brought.

DOROTHY: Yes (inaudible)

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Are we recording all this? I'm sorry.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes. No, that's all right.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Nothing else on the back of that?

JAMES GLEESON: No, that's the negative for (inaudible) that one. Now, this one is the portrait, a pencil drawing–and a very beautiful one, I think–of Doug Watson, done in 1940.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes. That was in Doug's years as a student at the tech. The odd hat, you know, dates it a bit, I think.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: He was a very good sitter. Actually, he was the only young man in a group of about eight women when I first took on the painting section at East Sydney Tech after Fred Leist died. I think he was already there as a student when I took over the painting section. He had two sisters at home and these eight girls in the studio and they all spoiled him a bit, I think. But, yes, done directly of course from the sitter, and a rather characteristic pose of the hands.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes, yes.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: But now, what date, 1940?

JAMES GLEESON: Nineteen forty; 1940 we have for that.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes, yes.

JAMES GLEESON: Doug, can you recollect if any of the works that we've been discussing this morning have ever been reproduced, published anywhere?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Well, let me think. Possibly *The wood heap* may have been published in one of Syd Ure Smith's books. You know the one. You feature in one of them.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: But I'm not sure about that.

JAMES GLEESON: Well, I can check on that, yes.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes. Now, otherwise—

JAMES GLEESON: The *Portrait of Dorothy*, has that been published anywhere before?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: No, no. I'm quite sure of that.

JAMES GLEESON: Or the Canberra ones?

DOROTHY: Many of them yes, but I can't think where.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes. Now, that one called *Canberra cloud*, I think I've got a reproduction here somewhere of it. Where it came from I don't know.

JAMES GLEESON: I wonder if you find that, could you let me know? In the catalogue we want to list, you know, wherever it's been reproduced or published on previous occasions.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: I see.

JAMES GLEESON: And also where they've been exhibited, if you can recall.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes. Well, I think I could recall that nearly everything was exhibited in the Society of Artists.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Possibly one or two—I don't think that Goobragandra picture was ever shown. I may be wrong about this.

JAMES GLEESON: What have we got on record here? We bought it from the artist in 1957 and it went to the Djakarta Embassy.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Well, that was purchased, as I say, by the committee which (inaudible).

JAMES GLEESON: The Art Advisory Board.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: The Art Advisory Board. But I'm not quite sure whether that's ever been exhibited in public collections or public showings.

JAMES GLEESON: Could it have been bought from your studio by Daryl or someone from—

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Will Ashton, I think, would have been the one who saw it.

JAMES GLEESON: I see.

DOROTHY: Daryl bought from Melbourne mostly, I think.

JAMES GLEESON: Daryl was on the Art Advisory Board, but I'm not sure the date he came on.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: No, I'm not sure either.

JAMES GLEESON: This was '57 we bought it. That may have been before Daryl's time on the Art Advisory Board.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Fifty-seven.

JAMES GLEESON: I think he went off in about 1970 or '71, and had been on it for many years before that.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes, I see. Would they have had a different committee in Melbourne from Sydney?

JAMES GLEESON: No. The Art Advisory Board was just a Commonwealth thing. When I came on to it, it consisted of Bill Dargie, Doug Pratt, Tas Drysdale, Bob Campbell and Daryl was just retiring.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: I see, yes.

DOROTHY: I remember a Commonwealth car, a very large shiny black one, parked outside (inaudible) and Will coming in about something, it was possibly this.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes, that's right.

JAMES GLEESON: It could have been Will Ashton.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes, it was Will Ashton. I don't even remember Doug Pratt ever coming to our studio.

JAMES GLEESON: I see. Now that we know the history of *The wood heap*, *Summer landscape*, was that exhibited in the Society of Artists exhibition?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: I suppose it was but, you know, I have to go through catalogues to whether—that's '46, isn't it? Yes.

JAMES GLEESON: And *Morning on Black Mountain*?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: I think that went almost immediately to the Foreign Affairs Department when the Evatt's bought it.

DOROTHY: They came around to see us—

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: We were at Les Allan's place in Acton and they came around to see us one afternoon.

JAMES GLEESON: I see.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: You know, they were both very keen about getting stuff into the embassies, and I think it was probably before there was an official body for oil painters.

JAMES GLEESON: I know it went to Rio de Janeiro.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Rio de Janeiro, yes.

JAMES GLEESON: That, I think, is a time when it was probably the capital before Brasilia became—

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: I think it probably was, yes. Have you ever been to Brasilia?

JAMES GLEESON: I've been to Rio but not to Brasilia.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: It must be very spectacular.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes, yes. Well, Doug I think that pretty well covers the works we have as of the moment in our collection, but could you perhaps give us now some biographical background? You know, your early years, what led you to art, so that we'll have a background against which we can set these works.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes, well, I was born in 1900.

JAMES GLEESON: Makes it easy for you to remember your age.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: We lived in the country. I was born at Inverell but we lived in the country at a little place called Nullamanna where my father had a general store, which until a few years ago was still standing. But, of course, once motor cars came into the picture the little village store was bypassed and people went into Inverell. It was 11 miles north of Inverell. About the time I left school we moved out onto a farming property where I did a lot of work on the farm; you know, ploughing, helping with the harvesting and so on. Then my father got ambitious to get on to a grazing property, so we moved to Wallangra, a place about 35 miles north of Inverell. He had tentatively bought a property of about two thousand acres which had frontage to the Macintyre River which snaked its round in an extraordinary bend, so that we had about, oh, several miles of frontage to this rather lovely river. Anyway, we hadn't got established there before we struck the worst drought in many years and he failed, in other words. We had to leave the property.

JAMES GLEESON: When would that be? You know, just after the war?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes.

JAMES GLEESON: The First World War.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: No, during the First World War.

JAMES GLEESON: Was it?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Because I remember that I was 18 when we were living there and the local parson tried to persuade me that I should enlist. But my father wouldn't have that at all because he thought I was too young, and so I was.

JAMES GLEESON: I see.

DOROTHY: Too youthful, I would think.

JAMES GLEESON: So the drought was during the war years.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: The drought was at the end—well, it was about 1919, '20. I think it went on for about two years. In an attempt to try to save our sheep, I used to spend all my time for a year or more filling gum, not gum trees, eucalypts, for the sheep to eat the leaves. Terrible food for them and, of course, they didn't survive then; the river dried up. Our sheep and those of our neighbours got all mixed up because the floodgates were washed away. They weren't there. I mean, they were there but the sheep had access down the riverbed.

JAMES GLEESON: That's right, yes.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Then for a time we moved sheep up on to a property about five miles away where there was low scrub and easier to feed them. I camped up there with another young man for several months and, anyway, this disastrous thing drove us off the property all together. At that time I decided that I'd been yearning to get away and get some study in.

JAMES GLEESON: You were interested in art at that time?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes, I got interested in it while I was still at school and, you know, I used to make copies of photographs and drawings and so on. Then a neighbour who was a very good amateur photographer got interested in painting. Through him I used to see the early copies of *Art in Australia*, and these were marvellous. I hadn't seen anything like them in my life before, except that when I was 13 the family came to Sydney for a trip and I remember going to the Art Gallery and being intrigued by pictures there. Anyway, I started to paint in watercolour about 1918, I think. I got a box of watercolours which I'd paid for with the sale of rabbit skins. That was a means of getting a little bit of pocket money, because we had such a plague of rabbits which were eating all the fodder for the sheep that we used to poison them with what was called a poison cart which dropped phosphorous baits in the furrow as it trailed around the hillsides. That was where I got my first water colours from. Around about 1920 or end of '20 or

’21, Gordon Esling, who was a friend of mine and who lived in Inverell and who had studied at Julian Ashton School and had then followed on as a scene painter in the theatre, he had formed a friendship with Gruner while he was a student at Ashton’s. We had a visit from Gruner, Gordon Esling and a grazier who lived some miles away named Cedric Campbell. This was my first introduction. Well, I mean, Gordon Esling, he was really quite a good little painter, in a sense, but he was—

JAMES GLEESON: Do I know his work? How do you spell his name?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: E-S-L-I-N-G. He was a devotee of Gruner and of his painting and they were rather a paler reflection of Gruner’s work. We have a nice one upstairs. Am I wandering too much?

JAMES GLEESON: No, no. This is exactly what we want.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: As I say, Campbell and Esling brought Gruner to visit us, and they had lunch with us. He took me outside. We walked down the river and looked at things and he took me outside and talked about painting and tonal values and so on and how you go about painting. Oh, it was quite interesting to me.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes, it must have been.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Because, you know, he was very keen on tone. The idea of landscape with the sky seen through a veil of foliage having to be toned down a little bit in relation to the mass of the sky and all this.

JAMES GLEESON: What year was that, Doug?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: That would be 1921.

JAMES GLEESON: Twenty-one.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Somewhere I’ve got a photograph that we took which is quite historic in a way. They went on north of Inverell and he made his way—they had a spring cart and a horse for drawing their gear. He and Gayfield Shaw, who used to be an agent in George Street, came up and visited him or stayed, worked–sorry, travelled around with him for a while–and also a cartoonist who was later on *Smith’s Weekly* named Lance Driffield.

JAMES GLEESON: Did Gayfield Shaw still have his gallery then?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes. In fact, I think he was Gruner’s agent at the time. Yes, my father decided that we should go, when they were painting some miles north of us on the Dumaresq River; that we should take our old Ford car and go up and visit them. We went to a place called Maiden Head where they’d been camped for some time, but they’d moved on just the day we got up to Maiden

Head. I remember us driving up the river keeping a look out for another camp where they might have camped for the night. Eventually we found them, just packing up. They had their spring cart all loaded, their horse called Jesus because he was their only hope. Anyway, Gruner had sent most of his paintings back to Sydney, but he had two there, rolled up on canvas. They were about 30–24 or perhaps bigger. I can remember him standing in the shade of a tree holding them by the two top corners to show us what he'd done. These were marvellous you know.

JAMES GLEESON: They really fired you in enthusiasm.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes, they did. Particularly I remember he'd introduced the dead heads of thistles, which were very plentiful, and they looked like flowers of a kind in the foreground. Later on, many years afterwards, I came across in some context a painting that he'd give Gayfield Shaw on the Dumaresq River just at this period. It wasn't very good but it came on the market with, you know—

I think I said my father never showed much enthusiasm for me leaving to go to Sydney to study but Gruner must have influenced him a good deal, I think. Anyway, when we lost the property and we had to walk off it more or less penniless; I decided that this was the time to make the break. So I set to work to get a bit of money together by doing odd jobs and in 1922, after we'd left the property–Dad had gone back onto a farm, share farming, in the Inverell Nullamanna district–I decided to make the break. I came to Sydney in 1922, I think it was, with 20 pounds in my pocket, which didn't go very far. I had to get a job almost immediately. The first job I got was in a second-hand furniture shop up in Parramatta Road. As soon as I had that–and indeed I think probably before–I'd gone and enrolled in evening classes at Julian Ashton's. The old man was still alive.

JAMES GLEESON: Was still teaching?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Still teaching. Well, Ann Dangar and Grace Crowley–yes, Ann Dangar and Grace Crowley–were his assistants, and a girl named Karna Birmingham was the first teacher I encountered who used to do pen drawings of rather nice childish things. But old Julian said, 'So you want to be an artist? First of all', he said, 'you'll have to learn to draw'. He looked at some of the things I had and, although he didn't make any comment at the time, he afterwards asked me, oh, I suppose, a year or more afterwards, if I'd ever been able to place any of these drawings, which I thought I'd try *The Bulletin* with some joke blocks. Anyway, that didn't work. I got this job up in Parramatta Road in the furniture shop. I used to go out delivering furniture around the suburbs, Haberfield and so on, with a fellow who had a horse and cart. And went to Julian Ashton's at night.

JAMES GLEESON: Who was there as a student at that time?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Well, I was just going to say that a little way down the street from where I was working George Lawrence's father had a tailor's shop. George was one of the students at Julian Ashton's. Of course I didn't know them at the time because I was of course in the antique class and all the—

JAMES GLEESON: More advanced ones.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: More advanced ones were in the life class, and we used to envy these people. They came out through–I don't know what–a curtained door out of the life class. But after I'd been there for about three weeks–no, it must have been more–Gibbons came at the end of that first year and Julian Ashton had him as a—well, I think he was there as the assistant who followed Ann Dangar and Grace Crowley when they went abroad.

JAMES GLEESON: I see.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes, one of the first events that interested me, of course, in the student world was the scholarship that Roy de Maistre won in 1925, and Grace Crowley was one of the candidates for that and everyone was hoping in the school of course that she would win. Anyway, they packed up and went off to Paris somewhere about the end of that first year and Gibbons came to the school in 1923, I think. Took on the evening classes first of all. One night he said, 'Go into the life class and see how you get on in there'. So I had my first evening in the life class. The next time I went in–I went three nights a week–old Julian was there and he was saying to Gibbons, 'What if he did that? Why can't we take him into the life class and send somebody else out?' or something like that. Anyway, from there on I was ensconced in the life class and there were people like John Passmore, George Lawrence, Rah Fizelle.

JAMES GLEESON: Dobell, was he there?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Not then, not yet. Not yet. Badham.

JAMES GLEESON: Badham.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes. He was pretty mature at that time.

JAMES GLEESON: Wilson?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: No.

JAMES GLEESON: Not yet.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Not yet. But a year or two later Bill Dobell came down from Newcastle I think. Before that I'd been living in various boarding houses and so on around Petersham and McMahon's point and so on. Fizelle was living in a hotel in the lower George Street area. He put it to me one night, couldn't we get a flat together? So he looked around and he found this flat in a beaut old house on

Blues Point Road, looking up toward Blues Point, Berry's Bay and Ball's Head. So we shared the flat there for some time until Fizelle went to London. Later John Brackenreg joined us. He came back from Perth. I should have mentioned that he was one of the students at Ashton's that I became very friendly with, and another chap named Harry Byrne who took on etching afterwards. He couldn't draw very well, but he had a sort of romantic attitude. Anyway, getting back to Fizelle and I sharing a flat. He used to teach in the Education Department at Darlington Practice School, I think.

JAMES GLEESON: I see.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: I think you followed him in some position, didn't you? What was it?

JAMES GLEESON: No, I don't think so. No, I think he followed me later on at the Teacher's College.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Teacher's College. That was it, yes. Anyway, he used to of course work in water colour all the time at that time, and he'd come home from school and be out water colouring between then and dark, while I only had the weekends and the evening school. Gibbon started a Saturday afternoon painting class a year or two–or a few months–after he came. This was a great thing for all of us who had to work during the day because we used to envy the day students. Enid Cambridge was one of the day students who was there at my time. The monthly sketch club that they ran at the school was a great stimulus because somebody, two or three students, would be chosen to criticise as the works were put up. Then later on, old Julian, if he was well enough, would come and sum it all up and criticise. He was, you know, most eloquent and very inspiring for us at that stage. Then the 1925 scholarship was won by Roy de Maistre and then two years later Murch got it.

JAMES GLEESON: It was only every second year then, was it?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: That's right. No, it was the '27 one. It must have been '23 that—yes, it was '23 that Grace from—

JAMES GLEESON: Grace Crowley.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Then Roy de Maistre won that and then Murch won the '25 and then the 1927 one was coming up. I decided that I'd have a go for it because I'd still have another chance two years later before I reached the age of 30. Old Julian was very good to us because he gave us the use of the school at weekends to prepare our work for the scholarship. Bill Dobell took advantage of that. He was in for it. I don't know how I did it but I sort of beat him by two years.

JAMES GLEESON: Can I interrupt? That portrait of yourself that was shown recently at the Macquarie Gallery, was that one of your works in that?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: That was done when I got the scholarship and went to Paris.

JAMES GLEESON: Oh, it wasn't one of your scholarship works?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes. No, it wasn't.

JAMES GLEESON: No.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: I'll show you one here if you like.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes, I'd like to see it later.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Eileen thought I should show it to you.

JAMES GLEESON: Good.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Anyway, yes, this one is the sort of, oh I don't know—

JAMES GLEESON: Anyway, it was 1927 you won that.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Nineteen twenty-seven.

JAMES GLEESON: Were you still working only at night time at the school?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes. I was working at Farmers–now Myers–during the day on the window display, or display staff. That, incidentally, was a job that after the furniture shop—Gruner's mother died just after I arrived in Sydney, so he was a bit preoccupied with that. He came into the school one night and asked me what had happened and when I told him he said, 'I'll see what I can do' and he saw the staff manager at Farmers and I went there and got a job.

JAMES GLEESON: Ah, I see.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: This was just before Christmas; first of all in the toy department. Then I was transferred after Christmas to the display staff where I worked with the display people. That was a good job because Farmers Exhibition Hall then was next door to where they have the gallery now. Beautiful hall, but they used to have mannequin parades and all sorts of things there, flower shows and occasionally an art show. We'd have to put up screens for the pictures to hang on.

JAMES GLEESON: Was it still called the Blaxland Gallery then?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: No, it was called Farmers Exhibition Hall. You know, when I think back, I was working in this interior display department with an Englishman, two Englishmen, who used to go out at lunchtime and get shot. After I left there–this is irrelevant to our main story I suppose so cut me off–I believe that on one occasion Chetelin, who was the senior one of them, came back drunk and

decided to go up on to the ceiling of the exhibition hall. He got access to it through where the electricians used to work their lights on the mannequins when they were parading, and have a sleep up there. He, I believe, awakened at midnight and roused the night watchman. You can imagine. The night watchman went up in a lift and found Chetelin standing there goggle-eyed. I don't know whether he got the sack for that, but he didn't last very long. But they were really terrible people. Anyway, I digress.

JAMES GLEESON: Never mind, it's all interesting.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Back to me.

DOROTHY: James, you really better be careful. This could go on forever.

JAMES GLEESON: Never mind.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: She's never heard this, I suppose.

JAMES GLEESON: It's all interesting and we'll edit out things.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: All right. Travelling scholarship came on and I worked hard for it. I found the other day that the judges—I knew at the time that Lambert was one of the judges, but the others were Bernard Hall and somebody else. I didn't know that at the time. He came over from Melbourne apparently to judge it.

JAMES GLEESON: Bernard Hall?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes. When Gibbons told me, you know, he quoted my non-de-plume and said: are you so and so? I said, 'Yes'. He said, 'Congratulations; you've won the travelling scholarship'. I just felt as though the floor had opened up and swallowed me because this was the end of everything that I knew and I'd be entering a new world. But I went overseas on a cargo ship, the *Fordsdale*, one of the Commonwealth Line. There were four other passengers. It took, I think, eight weeks before we got to Hull.

JAMES GLEESON: This was in 1927?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Nineteen twenty-seven. I disembarked at Hull and came down to London. Fizelle at that time had preceded me by several weeks and he and Eldershaw and d'Auvergne Boxall had gone off to Scotland on a sketching trip. I landed there, not knowing where I was to go but I had a letter from a girl who used to work at Farmers who had gone back to London with her parents, and she invited me to come and see them down in Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean. So I had a fortnight's painting down there before I came back to London. Then I think Fizelle, having come back, we went to Paris until the school started in October. I studied at the Regent Street Polytechnic on the advice of Syd Long, of all people. I had two or three very good teachers there. One was Harry Watson, RWS, and William Matthews who I got on very well with and another

painter, or animal draftsman, named Tresilian. I stayed there for two terms and then took off for Italy. Having met Norman Lloyd in Paris, we decided to go to Italy together. He went ahead of me, actually, and I met him in Venice and from then on sort of round Venice, Florence and so on.

JAMES GLEESON: Would this be the summer of ’28?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Twenty-eight. It was then that I discovered San Gimignano.

DOROTHY: (inaudible) a life-long love affair.

JAMES GLEESON: It comes as quite a shock, doesn’t it?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes. William Matthews at the Regent Street Polytechnic had lent me a book by Maurice Hewlett on *The Road in Tuscany*. It was illustrated by Joseph Pennell with very exaggerated hills going up like this, you know–lovely book. That fired me with enthusiasm for San Gimignano. I settled in there–Norman Lloyd too–for several weeks and I painted hard. You know, after working all day and studying at night, to get the opportunity to work in the school day and night. I met Jimmy Cook while I was there. At least he was living in the same digs as I was, and so was d’Auvergne Boxall. It was sort of Australian dominions club. So I made a life long friend in Jimmy. He used to come with me at night to Regent Street and we’d draw. Indeed, I had Jimmy pointed out to me by one of the teachers as a sort of shining example of what I was to do. He was very competent.

JAMES GLEESON: How long were you in Italy on that occasion?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: I think nearly six months.

JAMES GLEESON: You were working in oils and watercolours and drawing?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Oils and more drawing. Mostly oils, and drawings. Then I went back to Paris for the winter and got a studio in the same building as Norman Lloyd out at Puteaux and worked there till it was time one could get out to landscape again and went back to Italy.

DOROTHY: That’s where the portrait was done.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Mm.

JAMES GLEESON: The portrait? Oh, the one that was in the Macquarie Gallery exhibition.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes.

JAMES GLEESON: That was painted in Italy?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: No, it was in Paris.

DOROTHY: In Paris.

JAMES GLEESON: At the Studio Puteaux?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Mm. I had a studio which belonged to a dancer and she had these two great big mirrors on either side of the room. So I used the mirrors.

JAMES GLEESON: Now we're in, where, 1928? You went back to Italy in—

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: In 1929.

JAMES GLEESON: The summer or the spring?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: In the spring and summer. I think I'd got married in the interval, not to Dorothy but to my first wife.

JAMES GLEESON: Was she English or Australian?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Australian, a Melbourne girl. We came back to Sydney in 1929 after the Italian trip. But, frankly, I think we embarked from Naples. Went back to the same flat in McMahon's Point Road, Blues Point Road, which by that time was empty, and there I painted two or three of the things which were in the recent show at the Macquarie and all of which sold.

JAMES GLEESON: The one of Verona that was in that exhibition, the bridge, was that painted—

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Same year.

JAMES GLEESON: Same year, '29?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: No, '28.

JAMES GLEESON: Twenty-eight, the year before, the first visit.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes, yes. I remember.

DOROTHY: I think it was thought to be clearly a composition at that time.

JAMES GLEESON: Well, it's a very strong composition.

DOROTHY: Yes. I think people probably thought that was clear.

JAMES GLEESON: It's a fine painting.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes, I like it when you see it again, you know. It had been lying there for months and years. Look, James, I'm talking too much.

JAMES GLEESON: No, you're not. But if you feel you'd like to break we can, you know, come back another day, if you're getting tired.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Look at the time.

JAMES GLEESON: I know it's getting on.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: We could finish up, I think, pretty soon. I was telling you the other day, when we had to break off because of the machine, that I had my first show at the Macquarie in 1929. When that was finished it was moderately successful too. Basil Burdett was in charge then. He'd come down to Sydney from Brisbane during the years when I was at Farmers.

JAMES GLEESON: Was John Young not there then?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: He was in the show, but I think they were abroad at the time.

JAMES GLEESON: Oh, I see.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Basil presented me with a cheque for 240 pounds or something and said, 'Now there you are, you can go off for a year's painting'. But I was too cagey. In the early part of 1930 Murch came in one morning and said, 'There's a job advertised at the tech, you ought to put in for it', which I did. Actually, it was already booked for Roy Davies when the applications were called. But I got 10 hours of part time teaching out of the interview and found myself assistant to Fred Britton who was teaching drawing one day a week, and assistant to Fred Leist who was teaching painting another day a week. Britton was right up my alley. Fred Leist wasn't. But, anyway, it worked. Then I, you know, gradually—I think two years after I went there Fred Britton died. To my great surprise, Sammy Rowe who was then in charge, said, 'I want you to take charge of the drawing classes'. There was a bit of trouble there at the time because—do you remember Blacksmith?

JAMES GLEESON: Yes, yes. And Silversmith

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Silversmith. Well, Blacksmith had been in charge of drawing and he and Rowe didn't get on together at all. So Fred Britton had supplanted him and then I was to supplant them too. I didn't know this at the time. Or I may have, I don't know, but anyway. Well, you know the rest.

JAMES GLEESON: Well, I know that your association with the technical college continues until you retired.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes, I was there for 35 years.

JAMES GLEESON: And ended up as the head of the—

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Head of the school in 1960 when Roy Davies retired. I had five years of the office and all its administrative chores, which stopped me from painting very much.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes, yes.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Even I think stopped—we did get down to Canberra I think in that time, I'm not quite sure.

DOROTHY: The further you went up in the organisation, the less time we had to get away. When we did get away there'd be meetings and things you'd have to come back for.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes, because—

DOROTHY: Finally we just couldn't get away.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: That's right. I used to come in during the summer vacation in those five years to, you know, get all the papers together and send off the year's results of different people. Incidentally, while I mentioned Doug Watson there a while ago, when I first took over the painting after Fred Leist died there were these eight girls I think, seven or eight girls and Doug Watson in the class. It just grew and grew, particularly in the after the war years when the CRTS people were being trained and we got very good students coming back who had been in evening classes before the war and who were just itching to get back to it.

DOROTHY: Oh, what a wage too, three pounds fifty a week.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Poor beggars.

DOROTHY: For the three years to which they were entitled. But they did it, bless them.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: But there were two vintage periods when I was in charge of the painting class. There was the period while the war was on when Mitty Lee-Brown and Margaret Olley and Margaret Cilento and people like that were students who were really very very good indeed. Then after the war when people like, well, Tony Tuckson came in having just been discharged from the air force, and Guy Warren; Dave Lawrence, who is one of the curators at Melbourne Gallery now. Oh, a whole lot of them.

DOROTHY: (inaudible) Friedeberger, who's in Europe now.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Who?

DOROTHY: A lot of them are overseas and stayed there, but they were a brilliant bunch. Peter Banning.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes. There was so many of them of course that the Strathfield Tech was set up and we got a sort of new—

DOROTHY: John Coburn…

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: John Coburn.

JAMES GLEESON: Coburn, yes.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: They were a later wave, I think. Paul Beadle was put in charge out there and Wallace Thornton taught there with great enthusiasm, later to come to East Sydney. Yes, it was a very rich period.

JAMES GLEESON: Then while Bill Dobell taught there at night, did he?

DOROTHY: And in the daytime.

JAMES GLEESON: And the daytime.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Sometimes in the day. And Eric Wilson too.

JAMES GLEESON: Oh, did he? When he came back from Europe.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes. Medworth was in charge then and he got Eric in to do take the abstract classes.

DOROTHY: After it you got Ralph Balson.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes.

JAMES GLEESON: Ralph Balson came in?

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: That was interesting because—

DOROTHY: Dr Miller, of course.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes. Grace Crowley was appointed first as a part time teacher and she was teaching abstract to this pretty tough group of young men. After two or three weeks she came to me and said, ‘I’d like to give it up. I’d like to suggest that you get Ralph Balson in’. I only heard the story afterwards of what put her off. Anyway, I won’t go into that.

JAMES GLEESON: She found it too tough with these—

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Yes.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes.

DOROTHY: The place was terrific (inaudible) at that time.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes, I can imagine. Yes, yes.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Ralph Balson was very popular with some students. Then I think we had John Olsen for a while, yes.

JAMES GLEESON: You've had a very distinguished list of artists working with you.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: We did have.

JAMES GLEESON: They're marvellous.

DOROTHY: Val Lovett too (inaudible) except Gracie was a little much for her.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes, I can imagine. It would be difficult for her to cope. Well, I think we might call it a day, Doug. That's been very good.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: I think so.

JAMES GLEESON: Thank you very much.

DOUGLAS DUNDAS: Sorry I've been so verbose.

JAMES GLEESON: Not at all. It's all very interesting indeed.