

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE TASMANIAN HISTORICAL RESEARCH  
ASSOCIATION HELD IN THE ROYAL SOCIETY ROOM, TASMANIAN MUSEUM  
AND ART GALLERY, ON TUESDAY 13 MAY 2014.**

Present: The President, Caroline Homer, in the chair and about 50 members and guests.

Minutes: The minutes of the previous meeting were read, and approved.

Business: The President drew attention to the regular presentations, the next on 5 June, sponsored by TAHO and the Professional Historians' Association, and held at the State Library. She remarked also a recent publication by Lorraine Dooley, a THRA member, her subject the achievements of the Cooper family—builders, stonemasons, and architects. The next meeting of the Port Arthur group would be on 27 May.

Speaker: The President introduced Dr Nicola Goc, a senior lecturer in media studies at the University of Tasmania, with a great interest in history. Her subject was 'Snapshot Photography and Migrant Women: A Tasmanian Experience'. Dr Goc explained that her relevant interest was to explore the experience of women immigrants to Australia, especially Tasmania, between 1945 and 1976, her particular technique being to evoke memories and stories prompted by the 'snapshot photographs' they had retained from their past. In further background she spoke of the world-wide influence of the Kodak company not only in providing photographic apparatus but in propagating images of what a good photograph should comprise; cheerfulness should be the dominant message. For migrants photographs could have particular resonance, serving to diminish the sense of displacement and loss inherent in their situation; they could moreover strengthen communication between migrants and their friends and family left behind. Many of the photographs retained by the women in the survey depicted ritual occasions, perhaps boring to an outsider but crucial to those within the protagonist's network. Sometimes invocation of the past could become sombre: one Latvian family in recent years, taking photographs all the while, had sought to locate the spot where family members had been killed as they fled German forces. Often the women interviewed had initially protested that 'they had no story to tell', but photographs could prompt revelation of the opposite. 'Ten Pound Poms' frequently responded thus, yet one of them had displayed a photo of a backyard picnic which, despite being a very poor snap, was proudly sent back home as portraying 'our first Aussie barbeque'. A family from Poland still in the 1970s sent clothes and food thither, and were chuffed duly to receive photos showing their erstwhile garments being worn by cousins. European women, but not Britons, might have photographs taken that emphasised their pregnancy: one such still retained the dress she then wore. Contradicting Kodak precepts about cheerfulness, some photographed bereavement and mourning. A final story concerned a woman, with no close friends and family, who had discarded her photographs in a way that she hoped (almost certainly in vain) would lead to their eventual discovery and notice.

Dr Goc offered some general remarks on the difficulties faced by migrants, noting especially how the term 'alien' long remained in use, often with hostile sub-tones. Another concluding note was recognition that 'photographs' in the twentieth-century sense had now virtually disappeared. She invited all to an exhibition she was mounting at the University, to be opened on 6 June at 11 am at the Morris Miller Library.

After numerous questions, and thanks by the President, the meeting closed at 9:05pm.

Michael Roe for Secretary

Caroline Homer, President