

Present: The President, Caroline Homer, in the chair and about 75 members and guests.

Minutes: The minutes of the previous meeting were read, and approved as a true record.

Business: The President gave some further information concerning the prospective excursions to Westbury and Oatlands. At the December meeting there would be launched a CD version of the Knopwood diaries, as published by THRA. Alison Alexander remarked publication of her latest book, *Corruption and Skullduggery*. Ian Terry spoke of a symposium on 'Memory of the Great War', to be held at TMAG on 11 November.

The President introduced Tony Marshall as one who long had served at the State Library of Tasmania. His topic tonight was

*Henry Butler Stoney: Author, Solider, Settler, Journalist*

Mr Marshall began by telling that the Stoney family had long roots in Yorkshire, but his subject's great-great grandfather had moved to Ireland, close to Tipperary, there acquiring much property. Henry was born in 1816. Seemingly he attended Trinity College Dublin, but instead of graduating joined the 'British Legion' fighting the Carlist Wars in Spain. In 1837 he joined the Nineteenth Regiment and subsequently served not only in Britain and Ireland but also in Malta, Cythera, West Indies and Canada. Meanwhile Henry had married one Fanny Wilson, and parented several children (with more following). In 1852 he joined the Ninety-ninth Regiment, and consequently arrived in Hobart with two sons in June 1853. He at once became an active member of the local Royal Society, giving papers on natural history and engineering topics. More remarkably Henry now floated plans for a large-scale settlement at Wivenhoe, comprising up to 400 ex-servicemen of the Ninety-ninth, with due recognition of his own role as founder. Surveyor-General Richard Power killed the scheme, but Henry continued to argue in its favour, and himself invested accordingly. All the while he travelled extensively, and so gathered material for his book, *A Year in Tasmania*, published in 1854. Soon there appeared a further work, *The Delacourt Bouquet*, presenting various musical compositions, some by himself. After a sojourn in Victoria as the Ninety-ninth was sent to quell unrest associated with the Eureka rising, Henry published another musical work, *The Lyre in Tasmania*. His two earlier books, and much of his skilful woodwork were among Tasmanian exhibits sent to the Paris Exhibition of 1855. Mr Marshall stressed that in writing about Tasmania Henry strove to counter hostile prejudice about the place, consequently being over-enthusiastic at times, but still providing descriptive material of enduring value.

Now Henry returned to Britain with his Regiment, characteristically active in seaboard life and then publishing a new edition of *Tasmania* and a comparable book on Victoria before embarking back to Melbourne in December '56. Soon he published a novel, *Reginald Mortimer*, its hero an idealised self-portrait. While still in the army, he engaged in ever-burgeoning public activities which continued even after suspicion arose of his using positions thus obtained for financial advantage. In 1860 his Regiment went to New Zealand to engage against the Maoris, this providing material for his semi-fictional (and harshly reviewed) *Taranaki: A Tale of the War* (1861). In 1864 he retired from the army (with rank of 'Major'), then settling in Auckland. He next moved to 'The Wade' as postmaster, combining that task with his usual busyness as a public citizen; he even had a year's term, 1872-3, on the Provincial Council. However this decade saw Henry ever more beset with financial and family problems (the death of son Harry in 1876 especially grievous).

He resumed life as a petty bureaucrat, now stationed at New Zealand's far north. The job required considerable travel, and so provided material for journalist reports—some good, some not. Flax-dressing was his last enthusiasm for development, and he continued active into his seventies. However at his death, aged 78 on 4 July 1894, Henry lived in isolated poverty, no kin even attending his funeral.

After several questions, the President thanked the speaker for a fine address, and the meeting closed at 9:10pm.