

Present: The President, Caroline Homer, in the chair and about 65 members and guests.

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

Business: After welcoming attenders the President referred to various forthcoming events, and drew attention to the fact that some copies of the recent *Papers* had been misbound; replacements were available. Jim Marwood and Alison Alexander each spoke of recently published books written by their respective selves. This occasion was 'Members' Night', and so there would be two relatively short presentations.

Maree Ring's topic was

*Millie Jones, Carnival Queen of 1915 & Catherine Mary Roberts, "The Lady with the Flag"*

Michael Roe:

*Cecil Malthus: An Academic Anzac Linking Tasmania and New Zealand.*

Speakers: Mrs Ring's narrative began with the announcement of a Queen competition by Hobart's mayor, WM Williams, 18 August 1915. Following a model derived from New Zealand, the aim was to raise funds for patriotic purposes. A remarkable degree of enthusiasm and activity followed. Altogether eight aspirants entered the field, their aim being to raise the most money. Those with highest chance of success were Marjorie Walker (Queen of the Dardanelles), Mrs CE Davies (Queen of Sport), and Millie Jones (Citizens' Queen). Fund-gathering entailed a host of activities—theatre parties, afternoon teas, dances, raffles (one prize being a racehorse, while Miss Jones's fund made a thousand pounds through selling shilling tickets for a villa, with land attached), and so on—even a miniature rifle shooting competition and a gymkhana. A flag for each entrant was displayed at the Town Hall, in an order that indicated respective fund-raising success. Many thought that Miss Walker would be successful, but she was finally beaten by Millie Jones. A 'Coronation' ceremony at the Town Hall on 11 November was thronged and brilliant. Mayor Williams answered those who had criticised the event, asking how else could £10,000 have been raised? Negating rumour, he told that Henry Jones had given equal aid to all candidates, showing no favour to his daughter. Mrs Ring then spoke of another woman connected with war-time patriotism. Mrs Roberts won renown as she bore a Union Jack flag around Hobart, attending such occasions as the departure of troop ships—and the Queen Carnival coronation, where she was acclaimed by Miss Jones and the audience. Even greater recognition came as she won an honoured place at ceremonies during the visit of the Prince of Wales in 1920. Several public funds eased her situation. An English immigrant, widow of an ex-convict, Mrs Roberts died in April 1923; she received a semi-military funeral, her coffin draped with a Union Jack.

Mrs Ring's final remarks included reference to her grandfather having served in the same battalion, from Canterbury, New Zealand, as did the subject of Michael Roe's paper. Cecil Malthus was born in that locality in 1890. While descended from the famous Thomas Robert Malthus, his family situation was modest. Superior academic ability won scholarships that carried him through University College, Canterbury; modern languages were his specialty. The youth enlisted immediately on war's outbreak: 'the prospect of seeing service gave us a thrill of pure joy' His latter-day fame derives from his depiction of war experience in contemporary letters to his fiancée and two books published decades later. *En route* to Egypt his troopship called at Hobart, which he described as 'the finest place I have seen'. He served at Anzac and the Somme, his particular role being that of 'scout'—a task demanding skilful courage and entailing much risk. At the Somme he suffered injuries that led to discharge. After the war Malthus undertook post graduate study at the University of Grenoble, and then from 1923-33 taught modern languages at the University of Tasmania. While reasonably content there, he returned to Canterbury as a professor in 1934. His academic achievements were not of highest order; destiny awaiting retirement and those two books. His writing reveals a man of high intelligence and sensitivity, aware of the horror of war, yet able to transcend them. His claim to write history 'as it really was' had much validity. He told of the common soldier's experience in effective language, while also addressing broader human and philosophic issues. Malthus died in 1976.