

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE TASMANIAN HISTORICAL RESEARCH  
ASSOCIATION HELD IN THE ROYAL SOCIETY ROOM, TASMANIAN MUSEUM  
AND ART GALLERY, ON TUESDAY 14 OCTOBER 2014 AT 8 PM.**

Present: The President, Caroline Homer, in the chair and about 60 members and guests.

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

Business: Details were given of the excursion to Port Arthur planned for 22 November.

Speaker: The President introduced Scott Carlin as manager of House Museums at the Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery. In his opening remarks Mr Carlin spoke of the place of such work as his belonging in the fast-expanding realm of public history. It required that curators develop an inter-disciplinary approach in proactive way, so as to evoke play of ideas among site visitors, together with a sense of personal experience and involvement. Museum staff thus had a role well beyond that of merely being curators of museum objects. Congruent with this approach he and his associates fostered volunteer programs, childrens' activity, academic projects, and feedback through the internet and social media. Mr Carlin proceeded to talk about the major sites within his purview, many illustrations embellishing his remarks. First came the Private Secretary's Cottage, located within TMAG's site. It was probably built in 1813 (while incorporating some still earlier fittings), for an industrial use, probably stabling. JL Archer oversaw some reconstruction around 1829, fitting it for use by the Governor's Secretary—an office held by a gentleman, albeit of modest means. Thus the building fitted the model of a cottage ornée, elegant and picturesque, set in a garden. Stencils, probably by a convict artist, decorated the walls. Georgian furniture would dominate in TMAG's presentation of the cottage, albeit a relatively modest campaign bed also having its place. The second TMAG house was Markree, Hampden Road, built in 1926 and bequeathed in 2008 by Henry Baldwin, son of the original owners. The architecture had touches of Art Deco and of Georgian revival. Surveys had indicated a public preference for presentation of domestic interiors of the 1920s, and this had prevailed, some details being derived from the Baldwins' earlier home in Elboden street. Mrs Baldwin had followed the contemporary fashion among leisured women for 'arts and craft' activity. Her husband had assiduously planned Markree's fine gardens.

Whereas there was something of a dearth of artefacts associated with Markree, the situation at 'Narryna', the third TMAG house, stood at the other extreme—objects, collected with zeal since the 1950s, were so abundant as to stifle flexibility and innovation. As Stefan Petrow had argued the aim of those who in the 1950s launched Narryna as a 'Folk Museum' had been to honour the notion of the free pioneer colonist as a worthy citizen. The validity of this concept came into question in terms of Andrew Haig, builder and owner of Narryna—he was of dubious financial probity, while trading in Chinese opium and Mauritian coolies. Withal, following intense research and drawing inferences from such other sites as Summerhome, Runnymede, and Woolmers, some innovative work had proceeded, notably in the drawing room. In prospect was similar work in what had now been established as the principal bedroom, and the servants' quarters. The latter task would entail recognition of class tensions—evidence offered of various domestics absconding from duty. As at Markree the garden also offered scope for interesting projects.

Mr Carlin had begun by inviting comment from the audience as he proceeded, and this invitation was accepted by some who disputed the choice of colours for Narryna's drawing-room carpets. Several further questions came at the end of the address, prior to the meeting being concluded at 9:15pm.

Michael Roe for Secretary

Caroline Homer, President