

Abstract of Proceedings

1938

14TH MARCH, 1938

Annual Meeting

The annual meeting was held in the Society's Room, Tasmanian Museum. The President, His Excellency the Governor, Sir Ernest Clark, K.C.B., C.B.E., presided.

A vote of sympathy was passed to the family of the late Mr. H. H. Scott, formerly Curator of the Queen Victoria Museum, Launceston, members carrying this standing.

The following were elected Office-bearers and Members of the Council for 1938:—Vice-Presidents, Dr W. L. Crowther and Dr. A. N. Lewis; Treasurer, Mr. S. Angel; Council, Mr. W. H. Clemes, Mr. J. W. Evans, Mr. W. H. Hudspeth, Hon. L. M. Shoobridge, Mr. E. E. Unwin.

Mr. Walter E. Taylor was appointed Hon. Auditor.

Mr. F. H. Foster was elected a life-member of the Society.

Dr. A. N. Lewis explained the alteration of the Society's representation on the Museum and Botanical Gardens Trust under the amendment of the Tasmanian Museum and Botanical Gardens Act, 1885.

Dr. Hickman exhibited some Tasmanian Ascidians.

Dr. C. F. Hodgkinson delivered an illustrated lecture on 'Colourful Ceylon.'

11TH APRIL, 1938

A meeting was held in the Society's Room on this date, the President, His Excellency the Governor, presiding.

The following were elected members of the Society:—Miss Josephine Peterson, Mr. R. B. Wood, Mr. J. L. Somerville, Mr. T. Raphael, Mr. N. J. B. Plomley, Mr. M. P. Crisp, Mr. R. A. Sherwin.

Dr. Lewis exhibited several specimens of Tasmanian Trilobites.

Dr. H. D. Gordon gave an illustrated lecture on 'Seaweeds,' of which the following is an abstract:—

There are three classes of seaweeds—green, brown, and red. This classification is not so arbitrary as it sounds, for the differences in colour are associated with important differences in structure and life history. All seaweeds contain the green pigment chlorophyll, but some have additional pigments which mask the green colour. These pigments seem to be of importance in relation to the quality of light penetrating to various depths in the water; generally speaking the green seaweeds occur fairly near high water mark, the browns can extend much farther down, whilst the greatest depths are achieved by some of the reds. Ability to withstand drying is also an important factor controlling the distribution of various species

above low water mark, and may lead to their arrangement in distinct zones. Some species are not confined to one zone, but are to be found higher up the tide range in summer than in winter, or vice versa, in response to the seasonal changes in temperature and light intensity respectively.

As seaweeds absorb their food-materials all over their surface, and not through any root system which must live in the soil, they may grow attached to rocks, &c., or to other seaweeds, and in fact practically every seaweed of any size can be found to have smaller ones attached to it, though they are very seldom parasitic. The uniformity of the aquatic environment is reflected in a relatively simple anatomical structure, though the external forms of seaweeds are extremely varied.

Every substance occurring on the land finds its way, in greater or less quantity, into the sea, and an extraordinary variety of substances is absorbed by seaweeds and can be extracted from them. Iodine is prepared commercially in this way—a process which will become more important as other sources are exhausted. The iodine and other elements found in seaweeds give them a considerable food value, and refined food products have been prepared from seaweeds, whilst “Dulse” (*Rhodymenia palmata*) and others are eaten in their natural state in various parts of the world. Most seaweeds yield large amounts of gelatinous substances and several are used in cookery for that reason, especially *Chondrus crispus*, or Irish Moss, which is also used in the preparation of cosmetics, paints, boot polish, shaving soap, and a variety of other products, besides having medicinal importance as a demulcent. Some seaweeds accumulate lime and play a part in the formation of coral reefs.

A number of lantern slides were used to illustrate the structure and the reproductive processes of various types of seaweeds, and a collection of mounted specimens of British and Tasmanian seaweeds was exhibited.

Dr. Lewis took the opportunity of wishing His Excellency Godspeed and a safe return from England, and His Excellency replied briefly.

9TH MAY, 1938

A meeting was held in the Society's Room. In the absence of the President, Dr. A. N. Lewis presided.

The following members were elected:—Mr. M. C. Taylor, Mr. F. W. Hicks.

Mr. Henry Allport spoke about encroachments on certain streets in Hobart and exhibited original grants of town allotments.

Mrs. J. A. McElroy gave a paper (read by Mr. W. H. Hudspeth) on ‘Lieutenant-Governor Collins and his Royal Marines,’ of which the following is an abstract:—

The paper dealt briefly with Collins' military record, his part in the establishment of the colony at Port Jackson and his history of the first years of the settlement there. Then followed a sketch of the formation and distinguished achievements of the Royal Marine Corps, a detachment of which formed Collins' military force at the founding of Hobart, and an extract from his Garrison Order Book showed the pride with which he ordered a thanksgiving service for the victory of Trafalgar, even though his settlement was on the verge of starvation. Governor Collins' undoubted memorial, raised by his contemporaries and called after him, was old St. David's Church, and, so far, there is no evidence to show that the wooden building

begun near his grave in the burying-ground was ever completed, consecrated, or used for Divine Service. The existing monument, with the badge of the Royal Marines, was sanctioned by Governor Arthur and erected in Sir John Franklin's term of office.

Dr. W. L. Crowther read a paper on 'The Guano Islands of the 60's and 70's' (see p. 213 of the present volume).

Mr. S. Angel read a paper on 'Notes on the last of the Tasmanian Race,' of which the following is an abstract:—

At the beginning of the Nineteenth Century, when the sealing industry flourished in the Bass Strait, it was a common practice for the sealers, who were mostly escaped convicts or ticket-of-leave men, to abduct native Tasmanian women to assist in capturing the seals. In the search for new sealing grounds most of the islands off the southern coast of Australia were visited, and Kangaroo Island (South Australia) became a favourite resort, as it provided salt for the preparation of the skins and had the advantage to them of being outside the jurisdiction of the Van Diemen's Land Government.

There are records of several Tasmanian women who lived on Kangaroo Island prior to the colonisation of South Australia in 1836, but, unfortunately, details of their lives have not been officially kept, so that there is some doubt as to the dates of their deaths. The Southern Australian Census for 1866, in dealing with the native population of Kangaroo Island, records 'Four natives of Van Diemen's Land' and several old residents have stated that 'one, if not three,' of them survived after the death of Truganini in 1876. Only one of these women (Betty Thomas) left any children, namely, a son who went to sea, and two daughters afterwards known as Mrs. Mary Seymour and Mrs. Simpson. Grandsons of Betty named Stanford ('Tiger') Simpson and Joseph Seymour were interviewed by Mr. Norman B. Tindale of the Adelaide Museum in 1936 and were able to direct him to the site of two old huts where several flint implements of Tasmanian facies were found. They also supplied a few native phrases said to be in the Hobart dialect which Betty had taught them in their childhood, one word of which appears in Milligan's Tasmanian vocabulary.

Mr. Tindale has been successful in tracing a Minute by the Destitute Board, Adelaide, in dealing with an application for rations on behalf of Mary Seymour, which states:—

'There were three Tasmanian women, native blood, living in Kangaroo Island for many years, the last of these aborigines died about six years ago. 8/9/94.'

References in early South Australian history point to at least four Tasmanians living on Kangaroo Island in 1836, namely:—

- (1) Sally (known also as 'Bumble-foot' or 'Big Sal'). Taken to Kangaroo Island by Meredith, who was murdered at Yankalilla in 1834. Was tried with 'Suke' for complicity in the murder but discharged. Died near Big Waterfall at Middle River, but date and burial place not exactly known.
- (2) Old Suke. According to an old resident, Robert Snelling, she was the last Tasmanian to die, probably in 1888, as per Destitute Board Minute.
- (3) Betty ('Polecat'). Taken to Kangaroo Island with 'Puss' by Robert Warlens in 1817 or 1819. Afterwards known as Betty Thomas, mother of Mrs. Seymour and Mrs. Simpson. Her grandson, Joe Seymour, states she died in 1878 near Stokes Bay.

- (4) Puss arrived at the island with Betty, see above. Date of death and place of burial not known.
- (5) Little Sal. Buried at Springy Water, Stokes Bay, in 1877. Two old residents regarded her as Tasmanian, but others said she was definitely a native of South Australia. Discovery of her remains may possibly be effected.

6TH JUNE, 1938

A meeting was held in the Society's Room. Dr. W. L. Crowther presided.

Mr. A. L. Butler read a paper on 'The Life and Work of John Gould' in connexion with the centenary of his arrival in Tasmania. The following is an abstract of the paper:—

John Gould was born at Lyme Regis, Dorsetshire, England, on 14th September, 1804. When Gould was 14 his father received an appointment in the Royal Gardens at Windsor. There Gould acquired a knowledge of British birds and studied the technique of avi-taxidermy.

In 1827 he was appointed taxidermist to the newly formed Zoological Society in London, a post which he held for about 11 (or 14) years. In 1829 he married Miss Coxen (died 1841). She painted 600 of his bird pictures, mostly from his rough sketches, and afterwards redrew them on stone. In later years his finished drawings were made by Edward Lear, H. C. Richter, and William Hart.

After his marriage he embarked upon a series of ambitious monographs. Owing to difficulties in finding a publisher he decided to become his own publisher, and in the course of half a century he issued in parts a series of publications which make 41 folio volumes with 2999 hand-coloured plates.

In 1830 he produced the *Century of Himalayan Birds*. This was followed by his monograph on *Toucans* (1834), *Birds of Europe*, 5 vols. (1835-37), *Trogans* (1838). In 1837-38 he published his first Australian work, a *Synopsis of the Birds of Australia*, but he soon found that he had not sufficient material to carry on the work, and he took the heroic resolve of going to Australia with his wife and eldest son, J. H. Gould, and an assistant, John Gilbert. They left England on 16th May, 1838, in the barque 'Parsee,' 348 tons, Capt. John McKellar, which arrived at Hobart Town on 18th Sept., 1838. Gould carried letters of introduction to Sir John Franklin, then Lieutenant-Governor of Van Diemen's Land. The Franklins showed Mr. and Mrs. Gould the greatest kindness, and Mrs. Gould and her son stayed at Government House, Hobart Town, for nearly ten months while Gould visited the mainland of Australia. Mrs. Gould was staying at Government House when Franklin Gould, the youngest son, was born.

During his stay in Van Diemen's Land Gould received considerable help from Rev. Thomas James Ewing, R. C. Gunn, and many other local naturalists. This assistance was generously acknowledged by Gould in his published works.

Gould returned to England in 1840, and at once recommenced his *Birds of Australia*. By the efforts of Gould and his assistants the number of Australian species had been increased from 300 to 600. The seventh volume of this work was completed in 1848. The total cost of Gould's expeditions to obtain the birds and the expense of publishing the 600 plates was about £2000.

Mention should also be made of Gould's *Birds of Great Britain* (1862-73) with 367 plates, his *Birds of New Guinea*, with 320 plates, commenced in 1875 and finished in 1888 after his death by Dr. Bowdler Sharpe, the *Birds of Asia* (497 plates) commenced in 1850 and completed in 1883 after his death by Dr. Sharpe.

Mr. Butler concluded with an appreciation of Gould's genius as an ornithologist who had first-hand acquaintance with the Australian birds as the result of arduous expeditions into the bush.

Dr. Lewis gave some notes, abstracts of which are given below:—

1. *Productus subquadratus* Morris

Count P. E. de Strzelecki visited Tasmania 1841-42. His geological explorations in the island resulted in the discovery of a large number of fossils, many of which proved to be new to science. One of these, *Productus subquadratus* Morris, was given the vague locality 'Mt. Wellington to Dromedary' by Strzelecki. It is a rare form which, apparently, was not found by succeeding geologists. The single specimen found by Strzelecki is lodged in the British Museum. Dr. Lewis has now discovered several specimens on the slopes of Mt. Wellington and Mt. Dromedary, and these have been sent to Miss K. J. Prendergast, of Cambridge, for examination and description. The species would appear to be found very sparingly in the upper permian blue limestone which skirts Mt. Wellington, Mt. Faulkner, and Mt. Dromedary, and is found associated with *Aviculopecten*, *Eurydesma*, and *Spirifer*.

2. *Tasmanian Trilobites*

The work of the palaeontologists Dr. Kobayashi, of Japan, and Dr. Whitehouse, of Brisbane, has thrown new light upon the Tasmanian trilobites, and has added to the interest created in this group by the earlier investigators Charles Gould, Stephens, and Robert Etheridge, Junior. Dr. Lewis records his discovery of a new trilobite area at Juneee. It is hoped that papers by Drs. Kobayashi and Whitehouse on this interesting group will be published next year in this Journal.

3. *Glaciation in the Florentine Valley*

Included in his paper 'Notes on Pleistocene Glaciation, Mt. Field to Strahan' (vide p. 161 in present volume).

4. *Notes on the Geology of the Russell Falls River Valley*

11TH JULY, 1938

A meeting was held in the Society's Room. Dr. A. N. Lewis presided.

Mr. M. Blackburn was elected a member of the Society.

Mr. J. W. Evans submitted the following papers, which were taken as read:—

1. 'Australian Jassoidea. Part 8.' (See p. 1 of the present volume.)
2. 'A contribution to the study of the Jassoidea.' (See p. 19 of the present volume.)

Mr. A. W. Knight, M.E., B.Sc., A.M.I.E. (Aust.), gave an illustrated lecture on 'Bridge Engineering.'

Mr. Knight said there were some indefinite records of small bridges said to be 2000 years old. The Romans were the real bridge builders of antiquity, and beam bridges resting on piles were the type most popular.

The principles of the arch and suspension bridge appeared to have been known to the inhabitants of India, Japan, China, and Europe for at least 2000 years. The Romans brought the masonry arch to its high degree of development. With the fall of the Roman Empire, bridge construction in Europe came to a stop, and no progress was made until the 17th century.

The first cast-iron bridge was built in England in 1776, and the first iron railway bridge in 1823. About 1890 steel came into vogue, and entirely supplanted the use of iron. Reinforced concrete, which was developed in France, was first used about the same time. The development of those materials enabled longer spans to be constructed, and was the fundamental reason for the development of the modern art of bridge construction. The limits of the art were not yet reached, for the era of long span bridges had only just begun. It would be possible to build a bridge of at least twice the span of any yet constructed.

In bridge designing, Mr. Knight said, simplicity was most important, and the easiest way was the best. Principles of true economy must be applied to every detail. Rigidity was as important an element as strength, and the strength of a bridge was the strength of its weakest part.

Bridges in Tasmania at one time were constructed generally of timber. Their life had been about 25 years, but the period was becoming increasingly less because the quality of the timber was inferior. The policy to-day was to build of better materials, and permanent bridges generally were of concrete or steel.

8TH AUGUST, 1938

A meeting was held in the Society's Room. Dr. A. N. Lewis presided.

Provision was made for the admission of Associate Members.

The aims and scope of the Biological Survey of Tasmania were discussed, and three papers were read.

The following is an abstract of a paper by Dr. V. V. Hickman:—

The Tasmanian Biological Survey was established in 1937. The preliminary aim of the survey is the compilation of complete lists of the flora and fauna of the State. The schools, Tasmanian Field Naturalists' Club, and many persons interested in the study of natural history are giving valuable help by collecting specimens in different localities. Such work is a necessary prelude to the investigation of the distribution of animals, the relation between plant and animal communities, the influence of environment on flora and fauna, &c. Such ecological work is not only of the greatest academic interest, but also of economic importance. Plagues of mice, grasshoppers, thrips, aphids, &c., are special cases of a regular phenomenon of periodicity in numbers. A knowledge of the biotic factors responsible for these periodic increases in animal populations can be gained only by a careful biological survey carried out over a number of years. The survey may also provide useful data in regard to the advisability or otherwise of introducing foreign animals and plants into Tasmania, the biological control of pests, and the nature and quantity of trout-food in the lakes and streams at different seasons of the year.

Lantern slides of certain apparatus used in biological survey work were shown.

The following is an abstract of a paper by Mr. J. W. Evans, M.A.:—

A brief account was given of the geological history of Australia since Upper Permian times, and of the principal sources from which the Tasmanian fauna is drawn, special mention being made of the connexions with Antarctica. This

was followed by an account of certain animals, largely invertebrates, which occur in Tasmania and which are of outstanding interest. In conclusion it was stated that much remained to be learnt about the fauna of the island, and that it was certain that many new forms awaited discovery.

The following is an abstract of a paper by Mr. D. Martin, B.Sc.:—

The Botanical aspect of the Biological Survey was divided into four parts:—

1. The necessity for reviewing past work, cataloguing, and, if possible, obtaining copies of literature.
2. The locating of type specimens and overhauling and checking specimens in the local herbaria.
3. The completion of 1 and 2 then shows the gaps in our collections and allows us to judge the importance of any new material.
4. A statement of the present position.

The deficiencies in our knowledge of the vegetation was then approached from three aspects:—

From the point of view of the species individually.

The vegetation as a whole in relation to the rest of Australia and the world.

The interrelation and association of species in the field.

Lantern slides were shown illustrating climax and seral communities on Mt. Wellington.

12TH SEPTEMBER, 1938

A meeting was held in the Society's Room on this date. Dr. W. L. Crowther presided.

Mr. T. E. Doe was elected a member of the Society.

Dr. A. N. Lewis read a note concerning R. M. Johnston's 'Geology of Tasmania,' which was published 50 years ago. It was published on 1st September, 1888, and laid on the table of the Society on the 2nd Monday of September, 1888. Although R. M. Johnston was not the first to work at Tasmanian Geology, he may be, nevertheless, given the title of 'Father of Tasmanian Geology.' His book was printed and published by the Government, who also awarded him the sum of £500. In addition to being a first-class Geologist, R. M. Johnston was also a Botanist of repute and he also made valuable contributions to our knowledge of sea fish and other animals.

Mr. J. C. Wyett, B.Sc., gave an illustrated lecture on 'The Biochemistry of Digestion.' He dealt with the various digestive roles played by the different parts of the alimentary canal. The stages of digestion were illustrated by a motion picture film.

10TH OCTOBER, 1938

A meeting was held in the Society's Rooms. His Excellency the Governor presided.

On behalf of the members of the Society, Dr. W. L. Crowther welcomed His Excellency upon his return from a trip to Europe.

Dr. W. Arundel Orchard, O B.E., D.Mus., F.R.C.M., gave a lecture on 'Shakespeare and Music.' The lecture was illustrated by coloured drawings of various contemporary instruments.

In his introductory remarks Dr. Orchard dealt with the music of the 16th century, with particular reference to contemporary composers and to the interest shown in music by Henry VIII and Queen Elizabeth. He emphasised the influence of Shakespeare's Plays and Poems on Musicians from Thomas Morley (16th cent.) to Chausson (20th cent.). Descriptions of contemporary stringed and wind instruments were given, and the lecturer quoted passages from Shakespeare's plays to prove that Shakespeare had a profound knowledge of music and musical instruments. At various intervals during the lecture gramophone records of 16th century music were given.

14TH NOVEMBER, 1938

A meeting was held in the Society's Room, the President, His Excellency the Governor presiding.

Mrs. D. Archer was elected a member of the Society.

The following papers were laid on the table and taken as read:—
C. G. Stephens and R. F. Cane—'The Soils and General Ecology of the North-East Coastal regions of Tasmania' (printed in full in the present volume, p. 201).

Ellen Clark: 'Tasmanian Parastacidae' (printed in full in the present volume, p. 117).

E. O. G. Scott: 'Observations on some Tasmanian Fishes, Part IV.' (printed in full in the present volume, p. 139).

A. N. Lewis: 'Notes on Pleistocene Glaciation, Mt. Field to Strahan' (printed in full in the present volume, p. 161).

The following papers were read:—

W. H. Hudspeth: 'A Portrait of the Rev. John West.'

'A Pioneer Architect—James Blackburn.'

A number of Blackburn's Plans were shown and the Paper was illustrated by lantern slides.

W. E. L. H. Crowther: 'Tasmanian Aboriginal Remains found at Dromedary' (printed in full in the present volume, p. 209).

J. Pearson: 'Relations of the Tasmanian Canoe-raft' (printed in full in the present volume, p. 221).

J. Pearson: 'Frescoes in the Empire Hotel, Elizabeth-street, Hobart.' Photographs of these frescoes were taken before the old building was pulled down. It was stated, without confirmation, that these frescoes were painted by Gould the convict artist. The photographs have now been placed on exhibit in the Museum.

Northern Branch

Annual Report, 1938

In the 1938 Session all meetings, other than the Annual Meeting and Public Lecture, were held in the lecture-room at the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery. An appeal was made that books and records relating to the early history of Tasmania be deposited with the Branch for permanent custody.

23RD MAY, 1938

Annual Report and Public Lecture

Mr. W. R. Rolph took the Chair. The following members were elected to the Branch Council for the forthcoming session:—Mr. F. Heyward (Chairman), Hon. Tasman Shields, Messrs. D. V. Allen, J. R. Forward, J. E. Heritage, A. L. Meston, R. S. Padman, W. R. Rolph, and E. O. G. Scott. Mr. N. J. B. Plomley was elected Hon. Secretary and Mr. R. S. Padman re-elected Hon. Auditor.

The statement of accounts, showing expenditure of £5 6s. and credit balance of £31 0s. 10d, was adopted.

The annual meeting was followed at 8 p.m. by a public meeting, Mr. W. E. Masters, B.A., LL.B., speaking on 'The Semaphore Telegraph System of Early Van Diemen's Land.'

20TH JUNE, 1938

Mr. V. Sydes was to have spoken on 'Modern Radio,' but the meeting had to be cancelled.

25TH JULY, 1938

Mr. W. R. Rolph took the Chair. Illustrated lecture: 'Footnotes to Tasmanian History from Epitaphs,' by Mr. F. Heyward.

23RD AUGUST, 1938

Mr. F. Smithies presided. Mr. H. J. King showed 'Colour Moving Pictures of Tasmanian Natural History and Scenery.'

20TH SEPTEMBER, 1938

Mr. F. Smithies took the Chair. Mr. J. A. Dumaresq lectured on 'Veterinary Science and some of its Modern Developments.'

COUNCIL MEETINGS

Meetings of Council were held on: 16th February, 18th May, 15th June, 20th July, 14th September, 20th October.