

**Minutes of the Stoneleigh History Society meeting held on the 22nd of April 2025
7.30 pm at Stoneleigh Village Hall.**

Sheila welcomed everyone and congratulated them on negotiating the road closures.

Apologies had been received from Margaret Wallis, Ruth and Bruce Oliver, Kate and Philip Jones, Pam Baker, Quentin Compton- Bishop and Sue Crofts (Sue's absence meant that Sheila took the minutes, which she had drafted in advance!) There were 20 members present.

Tickets were on sale for the VE Day show and those participating were given their scripts! Sheila thanked in advance all those who were involved in any way and hoped as many members as possible would support the event.

Following the weekend of the show was the weekend of the village blossom festival. Those who had volunteered to help were thanked, and again Sheila hoped members would support Nora, Quentin and all those helping organise the event.

Next month's talk would be by Mel, on the Cistercian abbey of Stoneleigh.

Sheila then gave a talk on Sir Henry Parkes, followed by a sequence of photographs remembering our special days in May and July 2015. Booklets were on sale along with a variety of other memorabilia on display.

The Parkes family had been tenant farmers here for a century prior to Henry's birth, first at Moat House and then Gibbet Hill, after which they were evicted. There followed extremely hard times for all, and when Henry and his young wife Clarinda emigrated to Australia in 1839 they had many difficulties along the way. Ultimately his entry into politics along with his newspaper interest led to his making a huge impact on life in NSW, and he was recognised with a knighthood by Queen Victoria in 1877. Visiting Stoneleigh in 1882 he was feted by the village and the Leighs.

Sheila then looked at some of his achievements and the ways in which he has been recognised by Australian society since. She then looked at our commemorations in 2015 before concluding with Parkes' legacy.

The final, separate, slideshow brought back many poignant memories of those SHS members no longer with us.

The evening concluded with conversation, and refreshments provided by Adrian and Clare, thank you!

Sheila Woolf
April 2025