

**HAMILTON LITERARY SOCIETY ROSE PLANTING
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
HERITAGE ROSE GARDEN, GOVERNMENT HOUSE
WEDNESDAY 28 SEPTEMBER 2022**

Good afternoon and welcome to this special outdoor event: the planting of a 'Cloth of Gold' rose. This commemorates the fact that Lady Teresa Hamilton, your founder, was particularly fond of this variety.

Your Vice-President Kathy Rundle will speak about that shortly. What I would like to do is to tell you about this part of the Estate, known as the Heritage Rose Garden.

Before I do this, I acknowledge the traditional and original owners of this land: the palawa people. I acknowledge the contemporary Tasmanian Aboriginal community, their enduring culture, and the impacts of colonisation upon our First People.

Historically, this area between the quarry ponds has seen many changes. Initially it was divided from the main drive by a post and rail fence. The 1881 plan shows compartments marked 'flower garden', 'shrubs and flowers', 'flowers', tennis lawn and grass paddock, later used to grow lucerne.

An oval-shaped tennis lawn that was on the left of the main drive became redundant after the three Tennis Courts were built in 1887. In the middle of the last century, a croquet lawn was made which was replaced a decade later by a bowling green.

Roses have always been grown in the garden. Lady Hamilton was an early devotee and they flourished.

During the term of Governor Sir Francis Newdegate, some three decades later, the Garden was struggling, roses were only grown in what he described as the "rough area". By the 1950s there were few roses in the Garden for picking. They had to be purchased in town or sourced from the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens.

This inspired Lady Louise Cross, wife of Governor Sir Ronald Cross, to create a Rose Garden in the 1950s. She artfully chose an unused pocket of ground below the Tennis Courts. That pocket has been retained and refined as a rose garden, primarily for picking.

As an addition, this Heritage Rose Garden was planted in 1991 at the instigation of Sir Phillip and Lady Bennett. This area was for display, and to celebrate the history of rose cultivation. At the same time, many of the hybrid tea roses in the mixed borders on the terraces, 'without planning or concern for colour', were removed.

This Heritage Rose Garden was designed by Garden Consultant, Brian Lumb, to provide a selection of roses spanning centuries of rose propagation and to include species bred in Australia.

The beds are designed in four quadrants; with a central sun dial. The plan was for each quadrant to contain roses from specific groups, so creating both an aesthetically pleasing display and a visual history of rose breeding.

As planned, Quadrant 1 (the northern section) was to comprise the oldest roses, such as Gallicas, Damasks, Centifolias, Mosses and Albas, predominantly roses from the period up to about 1850, with the inclusion of some David Austin roses.

Quadrant 2 (the western section adjacent to the Japanese Garden) featured the next oldest group with Portlands, Chinas, Teas, Hybrid Teas, Hybrid Perpetuals and Bourbons spanning the period 1850 to the early 1900s.

Quadrant 3 (nearest the Main Drive) included Hybrid Musks, Rugosas, Polyanthas, Noisettes, Tea Noisettes, Macratha and Shrub roses encompassing the first fifty years of the 20th century.

Quadrant 4 (adjacent to the Bowling Green) was for other Australian bred roses and Floribunda roses up to the present day.

As I mentioned, planning and development of this garden began in 1991. The planting was completed the following year in accordance with Brian Lumb's plan. However, Governor Bennett, impatient with the slow growth of the new rose bushes and the sparseness of the beds, ordered more plants to be added. So more than a hundred new bushes were added.

Finishing touches included an arbour stone seat overlooking the quadrants. It was regaled with, to quote the Governor, a “thorny old Rambler”, a non-specific hybrid rose colloquially named “Lady Bennett”. This rose was in her honour from Tasmanian horticulturalists Max and Loraine Cross of Allendale Gardens, Edith Creek.

Governor Bennett maintained a keen interest in the development of the Heritage Rose Garden from the outset. He was involved in the selection of the roses, the design of the garden and the choice of sundial. Sir Phillip and Lady Bennett have left a lasting legacy at Government House with their attention to the Estate as a whole and with the close scrutiny of the Heritage Rose Garden.

A review of the garden in 2019 by heritage rose advisors to identify the roses growing today, has helped to plan which roses should remain, which should be moved elsewhere and which should be added, to preserve the Bennetts’ vision of a heritage rose garden that is historically interesting and aesthetically pleasing.

Now we are about to have a most historical, most significant and lovely addition.

We shall then walk to the Tennis Courts for tea. And guess what? They were constructed during the term of the Hamiltons. The credit is generally given to Sir Robert, but we do have some evidence that the courts were Lady Hamilton’s idea!

Thank you. David ...

[invites Kathy to respond]