

**TASMANIAN MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY FOUNDATION
'CELEBRATING ART AT GOVERNMENT HOUSE'
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
DRAWING ROOM, FRIDAY 6 OCTOBER 2023**

Good evening to you all, and a very warm welcome. I am sure you all enjoyed your tours with Michaye [Boulter] and David [Keeling]. We are delighted to have their work displayed with other works on loan from TMAG.

I begin by paying my respects to the traditional and original owners of this land: the palawa people. I acknowledge the contemporary Tasmanian Aboriginal community and recognise their enduring culture and continued connection to land, sea and waters.

For this TMAG Foundation event, I would like to refer to five works in this Drawing Room.

There are two views of Old Government House. On the right, the small painting is by Haughton Forrest. He painted it from a model that Lady Franklin ordered built. That model is in TMAG and we display it in the Ball Room on Open Days.

Two aspects of this painting are worth noting. First, although the walls were whitish timber, as depicted, the roofs were dark tile, not green. Because the model was not an *in situ* depiction, the surrounding foliage was presumably guesswork.

The second view of Old Government House is to my left. It is a delightful Knud Bull oil on canvas of Hobart and its surrounds, circa 1855. Knud Bull, as we all know, was a young Norwegian living in London. Convicted of forging banknotes, he was sentenced to a long exile in Van Diemen's Land.

His works are exceptional for their detail and are a record of those times. Old Government House is depicted as a long low building right in the centre of the painting and above the waterline. The artist's signature is on the buoy in the water. This work is privately owned and with us on long-term loan.

Chronologically, the next two paintings are the large Coronation portraits behind me, of George V and Queen Mary, great grandparents of King Charles III. George V reigned from 1910 to 1936.

The methodology for these works is interesting. They are known as autotypes. The original pair are in the Royal Collection and were painted in 1912. Students at the Royal Academy in London were assigned the task of making copies to send out to the Dominions. We can see these near exact replicas in other Government Houses in Australia – though not necessarily the same size.

The final fifth piece is here on the easel. You will all recognise it as the image on your invitation to this event. It is entitled ‘Government House from the Lake’ and was painted by Australian artist, John Eldershaw, probably in the early 1930s.

There is a story attached to this work.

In 1934, the Duke of Gloucester, Prince Henry, third son of King George V and Queen Mary, visited Tasmania and stayed here at Government House. As the *Mercury* reported, and quote: “Mr Eldershaw some little time ago presented to the Governor of Tasmania [Sir Ernest Clark] a picture of the Lily Pond [ie ‘Government House from the Lake’] ... and has since been informed by His Excellency that the Duke of Gloucester was pleased to accept the picture [as a gift] during his visit to Hobart.”¹ End of quote. (We may call that a re-gift!)

Let us now move ahead years to 1978 and to London. Our then Tasmanian Agent-General was advised of an artwork for sale depicting our Government House. He sent an image of it to Tasmania, resulting in this correspondence from our Official Secretary to the Under Secretary in the Premier’s Department, quote:

“His Excellency [Sir Stanley Burbury] has studied the correspondence and seen the photograph of the John Eldershaw picture and would like to see it purchased for Government House. Funds are available for this purpose and it is requested

¹ *The Mercury*, Thursday 25 July 1935, page 10.

that the Agent-General be authorised to proceed with its purchase and despatch.” End of quote.

The purchased painting duly arrived and was hung with pride here in this Drawing Room.

Just ten days after it was hung, early in 1979, the then Duke of Gloucester – Prince Richard, son of Prince Henry and grandson of King George V and Queen Mary, visited Tasmania. He was invited to stay at Government House. A note was later affixed to the back of painting and read as follows, quote:

“On seeing the painting the Duke proclaimed that he was the owner and that the painting was last seen in the family house at Barnwell [Northamptonshire]. He had no idea how it reached Government House, but subsequent investigations revealed that it had been sold by the Estate Manager inadvertently.” End of quote!

On that note of a twice-gifted, re-purchased, and much travelled painting, thank you all for supporting this fundraiser.

Thank you, David Keeling, and Michaye Boulter for your tours. May I thank our Foundation supporters for donating funds to enable TMAG to purchase some of the works on display.

Finally, thank you to TMAG for continuing to loan excellent artworks to Government House.

Please now enjoy the evening. Thank you.