

**HAMILTON LITERARY SOCIETY ANNUAL LECTURE
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, 2PM THURSDAY 8 JULY 2021**

Good afternoon and welcome to the Hamilton Literary Society Annual Special Lecture, to be delivered today by Dr Terry Whitebeach.

I would like to begin by paying my respects to the traditional and original owners of this land— the palawa people. I acknowledge the contemporary Tasmanian Aboriginal community, who have survived invasion and dispossession, and continue to maintain their identity, culture and Indigenous rights.

I warmly acknowledge Kitty Courtney, Vice-President; Committee members Libby McMahon, Venie Phillips and Kathy Rundle – and all Members and guests here today.

It is a pleasure to host the annual lecture in the 132nd year of the oldest literary society in Australia.

I have read with great interest your histories of The Hamilton Literary Society 1889-2014. I have enjoyed seeing the images of Lady Hamilton's watercolours in the recently published *Government House Tasmania: A Remarkable Story* – her five paintings having been officially handed to the Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts in 2009 by your then President Frances Underwood.

I am impressed by the meticulous record of the members' papers from 1957, the number of papers given each year and the annual themes that were introduced in 1962. I was struck by the variety of themes and the prolific number of papers given. My book club could certainly learn a lot from your Society, by way of organisation, ideas and themes for our reading.

It was interesting to read that another society, the Itinerants, started after Lady Hamilton became upset when some members attended a cocktail party on board one of the several naval ships in town, instead of attending a society meeting. And that the Itinerants continue today.

It was also interesting to read the Rules made in 1892 before Lady Hamilton's departure from Tasmania, when three vice-presidents were to be elected yearly, one of whom was to take the Chair at each meeting. The name of the Society was also changed from Nil Desperandum to its current name with Lady Hamilton to hold the position of Foundress. One of the Rules interestingly states that a prospective member could be blackballed by one vote in five.

After Lady Hamilton's departure, the wives of Governors accepted the role of President, although one wife, Lady Bennett, preferred to be patron.

It was noted that in 2006, amendments were made to the Rules to reflect a modernisation of the Society that had taken place. There was recognition that there may not always be, quote, "a wife of the current governor," who could take up the role of President. I understand that the Rules have been amended for female governors to assume the role of President!

A recent innovation at Government House, which will interest you, is that we now have the beginnings of a permanent Library. Although in this building's lifetime there have been various rooms called "The Library", there never has been anything like a book collection policy. Our new Library is upstairs in the Executive Council Room; however it will take some time yet to formally assemble and catalogue.

That's enough from me. I'm very much looking forward to Dr Whitebeach's lecture.

Thank you.