

**HAMILTON LITERARY SOCIETY ANNUAL SPECIAL LECTURE**  
**REMARKS BY**  
**HER EXCELLENCY PROFESSOR THE HONOURABLE KATE WARNER AC**  
**GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA**  
**GOVERNMENT HOUSE, WEDNESDAY 3 JULY 2019**

Good afternoon and welcome to the Hamilton Literary Society Annual Special Lecture, to be delivered today by Professor Michael Roe.

This is the fifth occasion on which, as President, it has been my honour to host the annual lecture. And I am always pleasantly conscious of the fact that this event had its origins here at Government House; being named after its founder Lady Hamilton when she and her husband, Governor Sir Robert Hamilton, lived in Tasmania from March 1887 to November 1892.

I have recently been admiring Teresa Hamilton's watercolours that are in the Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts, with a view to including one or two in the Government House history book David and I are writing.

Her painting of the South Terrace pool is particularly interesting. Rather than being encircled with box hedging as it is today, it shows two cordylines flanking the pool and a central clump of planting. They cordylines were still there until their removal in the 1930s.

We also have a number of photographs of the Hamiltons and friends in the garden, which were given to Government House by author and artist Lady Joan A'Beckett Lindsay, granddaughter of Sir Robert and Lady Hamilton. One shows the South Terrace pool, with cordylines and shrubbery and with a small boy, possibly one of the Hamilton's two young sons, holding a toy sailing boat in his hands. Another shows their daughter Mary on a pony near, I think, the South Terrace steps. [I have left the book with photographs in the entrance hall, open at the relevant page for you to see on the way out.]

Lady Hamilton's artistic skill is a reminder of how much she did while here that was of real value to the then colony.

Thus the Mercury reported in January 1889 that, quote: “Lady Hamilton has continued to take great interest in the social-well-being of the people. A Government House Sketching Club and Glee Class (a capella song) have been formed. The latter has been very successful, the former has received good support.”<sup>i</sup>

Researching the garden’s history, I have become interested in the Governors’ families, what changes they made to the gardens, not merely what they planted and grew but how the families used the gardens. The three tennis courts were built at the instigation of Governor Sir Robert and Lady Hamilton soon after their arrival in 1887. Their daughter Anne wrote that her father enjoyed forking up the weeds on the courts (as well as spending time reading in a hammock under a mulberry tree in the fruit garden, far away from casual callers and the telephone).<sup>ii</sup>

As well as tennis, the Hamilton family made good use of the bathing shed on Pavilion point; and as evidenced by the photograph of Mary Hamilton, they had ponies and horses. And we can be sure that painting was encouraged by Lady Hamilton.

It is of course her principal legacy that lives on in the Hamilton Literary Society. And what a good thing that is. It is a particular pleasure for me to have Professor Michael Roe as the speaker today. As a young academic at the University, Michael gave me great encouragement and support and for that I am very grateful.

Thank you.

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<sup>i</sup> The Mercury, Tuesday 1 January 1889 page 3.

<sup>ii</sup> ASH Weigall, *My Little World* (1934) 88-89.