

**MASTER MARINERS ASSOCIATION OF TASMANIA  
REMARKS BY  
HER EXCELLENCY PROFESSOR THE HONOURABLE KATE WARNER AC  
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA, WEDNESDAY 5 DECEMBER 2018**

Good evening and welcome to this reception for members and partners of the Master Mariners Association of Tasmania.

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

May I acknowledge among you:

- Captain Charles Weston, MMAT President ;
- Bruce Wallis, Secretary/Treasurer.

In fact this is an occasion to symbolically acknowledge every single one of you, because I believe this is the first Master Mariners Association of Tasmania event to be held at Government House.

And it's an interesting story in its own right. Charles had originally written to us in February this year, requesting consideration of Patronage, and I was delighted to accept that invitation.

Charles had noted in that letter that unlike your sister organisations elsewhere in Australia, MMAT had never had a Patron.

Dick and I were then invited to attend your annual formal dinner on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> of June this year at the Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania, Sandy Bay. We had to decline due to a prior engagement – that being our attendance at a dinner for The Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem, of which I am the Deputy Prior in Tasmania. But we are attending your dinner in June next year.

So this means that this is our inaugural get-together!

Actually there has in the past been an association of a Tasmanian Governor with Master Mariners. You'll all know of Admiral Sir Hugh Binney; he was our Governor from December 1945 to May 1951. He had been gunnery officer of *HMS Queen Elizabeth* in The First World War; was Commandant of the Imperial Defence College; and between 1939 and 1942 Admiral Commanding the Orkneys and Shetlands. And during his term as Tasmania's Governor he was Master of the Company of Master Mariners, that is, the head of the Association in Australia.<sup>1</sup>

That of course preceded your founding in 1966, but it does re-establish a Tasmanian Vice-Regal link to your profession. Incidentally there are fine portraits of Sir Hugh and Lady Binney in the Main Hallway.

Now, while I have you as a captive audience with very considerable knowledge of all things maritime, I would like to see if any of you can enlighten me on a very local matter, one that is intimately associated with Government House.

The former Monty Python star and author Michael Palin was in Hobart on Monday signing copies of his book *Erebus: the Story of a Ship* at the State Cinema bookstore. Some of you may already have the book, and you will undoubtedly know the story – that *HMS Erebus* was built in Wales in 1826; that its first journey was a great success, bringing back to the UK huge amounts of new information about the Antarctic, and making the careers of several of the men on board; that its second journey was an attempt to navigate the Northern Passage, where the ship and its crew were lost, the ship only being discovered in 2014.

Captain James Ross commanded *HMS Erebus* and *HMS Terror*, his close friend and colleague Captain Francis Crozier was second-in-command and, prior to the Antarctic voyage, they worked closely with the then Lieutenant-Governor of Van Diemen's Land Sir John Franklin, establishing the Rossbank Magnetic Observatory in 1840, the remnant buildings of which are part of this Government House estate.

Michael Palin spent a good part of a day with us last year while researching the book. In particular, of course, his attention focused on James Ross. And in the book he describes Ross Bay, just south of the Tasman Bridge. I will quote the short description:

“The beach, a thin strip of loose stones between the river and the grass, must have been much the same when the ship's cutters rode up against it [177 years ago].”<sup>2</sup>

In preparing for Michael Palin's visit, David did some research on the the naming of Ross Bay. This too is interesting. The name “Ross Bay” was only gazetted by the Nomenclature Board of Tasmania on 11 August 1965. So did it have that name before, and if so for how long?

The General Manager of Land Tasmania, which is part of DPIPW, unearthed the minutes of a Nomenclature Board meeting in November 1964, which was held to set up forthcoming names for gazetting. The name "Ross Bay" appears in those Minutes. This is because it appeared on what was referred to in the Minutes as the "Port of Hobart Chart".

But that Chart can't be found.

The question is, therefore, when did the name first come into use, formal or informal, as a way of commemorating Captain James Ross's stay in Hobart in 1840?

As your Patron, I demand answers ...

But that is quite enough from me. Please do enjoy the reception and feel free to take a look at our lovely State Rooms in this area.

Thank you.

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<sup>1</sup> Courier Mail, Brisbane, Tuesday 20 May 1947.

<sup>2</sup> *Erebus: the Story of a Ship* page 80.