

RECEPTION FOR MEMBERS OF THE JESTERS CLUB
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
BALL ROOM, THURSDAY 10 NOVEMBER 2022

Welcome to our beautiful Government House and to this reception to mark this visit of the touring members of The Jesters Club to Tasmania.

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.

I would like to acknowledge among us:

- Robert Dolman, Chairman of the UK Jesters
- And all the Jesters team.

It is fitting that Government House Tasmania is hosting this reception, with the link between the Sovereign's representatives throughout the Realms and your Jesters Club.

The late Duke of Edinburgh was the Patron of the club for a staggering 67 years. Your club now has more than 3,000 members in the UK, and South Africa, Canada, Australia, as well as the USA.

The Jesters trace their lineage back to England in 1929. Founded by Jock Burnet, the club began with playing squash and fives, but quickly expanded to include real tennis, rackets and Padel – a mix of tennis and squash that is, apparently, the fastest growing sport in the world!¹

Our Real Tennis court no doubt was the attraction for your visit to Hobart. I hope you enjoyed our tennis courts today, the first time used this season, so a little slow, but at least the weather was fabulous.

¹ <https://padel.org.au/> accessed 9 Nov 22

Your club is dedicated not only to the organisation and promotion of the racket sports throughout the world but also to the encouragement of the virtues of sporting standards.

Your founder, Jock Burnet, said that the club and members should demonstrate “an intention to get away from the serious nature of competitive games where the result may be thought more important than the enjoyment of the players”. This is the spirit of the Jesters.² I look forward to hearing whether this is correct.

Checking my facts, I found that that one of the definitions for “Jester” is a “professional joker or ‘fool’ at a medieval court, typically wearing a cap with bells on it and carrying a mock sceptre.”³ I was disappointed not to see any caps or sceptres, mock or real amongst you. So, I shall have to settle for the alternative definition of ‘one who is given to witticisms, jokes and pranks.’⁴ That may better fit your group.

As a once active hockey, lawn tennis and real tennis tragic, I look forward to hearing about your sporting activities. Please enjoy our beautiful State Rooms and the reception.

Thank you.

² <https://www.thejestersclub.org/club-info/> accessed 9 Nov 22

³ <https://languages.oup.com/google-dictionary-en> accessed 9 Nov 22

⁴ <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/jester> accessed 9 Nov 22