

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Organisation

Entry ID: AWE0760

The Itinerants Literary Society

(1894 -)

Born 1 January, 1894, Hobart Tasmania Australia

Occupation Arts organisation

Summary

The Itinerants Literary Society began as a result of a dispute with the Hamilton Literary Society in 1894 when a group of members broke away to form a separate society. They are 'itinerants' in that they meet at each member's home in turn. The Society's rules set out the number of members, hours of meeting and terms of membership. At each meeting, members present papers which range widely. The minutes show how themes and topics are chosen and reveal a close adherence to the rules. Early subjects discussed included famous writers and political topics (including women's suffrage), 'women who have made history' (including Jane Franklin, Sarah Bernhardt and Sonia Kovaleski).

Details

the records preserve a little-known aspect of Hobart women's cultural and social life. Members appear to have been generally conservative. For example, few supported women's suffrage. There is also a poem written in 1954 exhorting electors to vote for Liberal Party leader Robert Menzies. Of particular interest, then, are the papers by Ida McAulay. Her paper on Women's Suffrage expressed disappointment that so few members supported this move. For her the vote for women both a right and a necessary social reform, especially to achieve change in laws relating to divorce and custody of children. Her paper on education asserted the intellectual of women and extolled the study of science and mathematics for both sexes. She also supported sex education the need for women to restrict the size of their families. While advocating equality of education, she believed that girls should also be trained for motherhood—outlining an extensive curriculum including physiology, hygiene, first aid, nursing, cookery and domestic economy.

Published resources

Journal Article

The Itinerants - a Ladies' Literary Society, Alexander, Cynthia, 1985

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

Archives Office of Tasmania

[Minutes of meetings, Hobart](#)

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