



La Trobeana

The Newsletter of the La Trobe Society of Australia

Grevillea La Trobeana Engraving by Edward La Trobe Bateman - La Trobe Collection, State Library of Victoria

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La Trobeana is the Newsletter of the La Trobe Society Inc. It appears three times per year, with news of forthcoming events, and reports of interest to the membership. Contributions are always welcome. Please contact Fay Woodhouse at fay.woodhouse@admin.monash.edu.au

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President: Mr Rodney Davison, AO, OBE.
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Treasurer: Mr John Drury
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A Word from the President Rodney Davidson, AO, OBE

What a great year it's going to be!

The big news is that after years of work, led by John Drury, we have income tax deductibility through the Australia Cultural Fund, for an appeal to create the first statue of Charles Joseph La Trobe.

The appeal, just launched, is going well, and the statue has been commissioned.

Please make a donation, as much as possible, but of course, every little helps!

Dianne Reilly's book, *La Trobe: The Making of a Governor*, has been launched, as has the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) **Year of La Trobe**. Many events will be held to celebrate the importance of La Trobe to Victoria.

Please consider inviting a friend to join our Society - membership is a great strength!

All in all, 2006 is going to be a great year! Support your Society in celebrating this important milestone.

Rodney Davidson

FORTHCOMING EVENTS 2006 CALENDAR

THE YEAR OF LA TROBE

June - Book Launch

La Trobe's Jolimont: My Australian Garden

Tuesday 6 June, 6.00 for 6.30 pm
Mueller Hall, The Herbarium, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra,

Joint publication of the La Trobe Society and the Australian Garden History Society.

RSVP: Helen Botham - 9583 1114
(see p. 16 for details of launch & lecture)

June - Joint La Trobe Society/RHSV

AGL Shaw Lecture

Charles La Trobe: the Forgotten Governor
Thursday 22 June, 6.00 for 6.30 pm Village Roadshow Theatre

State Library of Victoria
\$5 members \$10 non-Members
RSVP: Gerardine - 9326 9288

August - Annual General Meeting

Date and speaker to be confirmed.

December - Christmas Cocktail Party

Date and speaker to be advised.

Review of Recent Events

A Night of Launches at Rippon Lea



NATIONAL TRUST

National Trust of Australia (Victoria) 50th Anniversary and Launch of The Year of La Trobe, 20 March 2006

The launch of the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) Year of La Trobe was held on Monday 20

March in the beautiful *Rippon Lea Ballroom*, Elsternwick.

CEO of the National Trust, Mr Stephen Hare, told an audience of more than one hundred members of both the National Trust and the La Trobe Society, that as part of the celebration of the 'Year of La Trobe', the Trust will feature a travelling exhibition of La Trobe's watercolours. Regional centres where the exhibition can be viewed are: La Trobe University Gallery, Hamilton Art Gallery, Swan Hill Art Gallery and La Trobe Regional Gallery in Morwell.

Other events will also be scheduled to pay tribute to the foresight of our first Lieutenant-Governor, Charles La Trobe, and members will be informed of details. We look forward to the National Trust's celebration of this Year of La Trobe. Mr Hare said: 'Much remains to be done, and collaboration is required between the Trust and the La Trobe Society to fulfil our mutual aim to promote recognition and understanding of the achievements of Charles Joseph La Trobe'.

Book Launch - *La Trobe: The Making of a Governor* by Dianne Reilly

Professor Peter McPhee, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, The University of Melbourne, launched this new study of La Trobe's career. The work was derived from Dianne Reilly's PhD thesis, awarded in 2003.

Professor McPhee spoke passionately about Dianne's work, and the importance of it in documenting and analysing La Trobe's role in Victoria's colonial history.

Launch of the C J La Trobe Statue Fund

Mr John Drury, Treasurer of the La Trobe Society, launched the C J La Trobe Statue Fund, commending it to the audience and emphasising the importance of the fact that contributions are tax deductible making it a benefit to those who wish to donate to the Fund.

The aims of this Society are to erect a bronze statue of La Trobe, and to facilitate a Fellowship in his name for the study of the colonial period of Victoria's history, and these intentions were reiterated during John's launch of the Statue Fund. Member Daryl Ross officiated in the absence of the Society's President.

To date, contributions of approximately half the required amount have generously been made by members. All are encouraged to make contributions, to attain our goal of raising \$90,000-100,000 for the appeal.

2005 Christmas Cocktail Function

On Friday 9 December at the Lyceum Club, Ridgway Place, Melbourne, Dr Marguerite Hancock gave a paper describing the life of Sophie La Trobe and her experience in Melbourne. Marguerite's knowledge of Sophie's time here, and the experiences of other

governor's wives, shone through her paper which was very well received by the enthusiastic audience. Around 40 guests enjoyed the convenient location of the Lyceum Club and its convivial surroundings, as well as excellent refreshments.

Due to the popularity of Marguerite's talk, it is reproduced in full on pages 12-14.



Introducing the first of the
La Trobeana Series:
La Trobe's Journeys of Exploration
of the Port Phillip District

As promised in the November 2005 edition of *La Trobeana*, three articles on La Trobe's exploration of the Port Phillip District are published in this edition. The first is by Fay Woodhouse who has begun editing La Trobe's diary of his forays into South Gippsland during 1845. The second is an article by Peter Alsop, President, Geelong Historical Society, detailing La Trobe's exploration of and association with the Geelong District. The third is an examination of La Trobe's exploration of Cape Otway by Dianne Reilly.

La Trobe in South Gippsland

Prior to setting out in February 1845 on his journey to establish a route to Gippsland, La Trobe, Sophie and two of

their daughters had been holidaying at Shortlands Bluff, present-day Queenscliff. His cottage was located on the site now occupied by St George's Anglican Church, Hobson Street, Queenscliff. On the 7th December 1975, La Trobe's association with the site was commemorated by the unveiling of a tablet in the grounds of the Church.

La Trobe's journey of exploration into South Gippsland included travel on horseback, by carriage and some use of boats and punts. Much of the terrain was hard to traverse, and at times the party lost its way. *En route*, they experienced some exuberant Scottish hospitality as many of the first pastoralists to the area were Scots, including Angus McMillan and Samuel Anderson, two of the earliest explorers of the region.

La Trobe's account of the journey makes interesting reading, since he visited many early settlers of the district whose names will be familiar to readers of early Melbourne history. A strong sense of the man, his strengths, and his curiosity, comes through a close reading of the text. His summary at the beginning and end of the journal entries lists the people and places he visited, as well as the distance in miles covered between notable points in the landscape.

The journey is recorded over a number of pages in a handwritten bound volume, C J *La Trobe Memoranda of Correspondence 1839-1851. Memoranda of Journeys, Excursions & Absences 1839-1854*, MS H15604, Box 79/5, La Trobe Australian Manuscripts Collection at the State Library of Victoria. The writing is consistently hard to decipher, however, despite my best efforts, some words still elude me. These are noted as '(?)'. * However, in the main, where the writing is unclear, the meaning of a sentence can still be made out.

* Most cases of doubt have been subsequently resolved. (Ed.)

In places, punctuation is sparse, and I have not added another word to the original text.

La Trobe's companions on the journey were Henry Dana (1820-1852) of the Native Police Corps and Frederick Armand Powlett (1811-1865), Commissioner of Crown Lands for the Westernport District.

I hope readers will enjoy this excursion into the earliest days of South Gippsland, now the Bass Coast Shire.

Gippsland February - March 1845

31) Feb. 28 to Gippsland. Leave S[ophie]. at Heads.

28 Western Port

1 Mar Thoms

2 Camp in the Scrub

3 Fish River

4 Shipping Place

5 Taraville

6 Raymonds

7 Eagle Point

8 McAllisters

9 Reeves

10 The Albert

11 Camp Hoddle's Range

12 Forest camp Tarwan

13 Martins

March 14th Melbourne

30)¹ Towards the close of the year very busy planning and executing my proposal for erection of a cottage at the back of the Bluff² and by a good exercise of personal exertion and labour contrived to have all in a pretty forward state for the first of Jan[uary]. 3 room'd cottage with verandah - and tents and store and open working shed - on the

¹The numbers 30 and 31 refer to page numbers within the journal. They are certainly not the date.

² The house was located on the current site of St George's Anglican Church in Hobson Street, Queenscliff.

highest ground over the northern end of the Bluff - a charming situation - proved very comfortable in the main - and our stay there despite the want of sufficient and good water and difficulties of getting provisions occasionally a very pleasant retreat. S. and the children stayed there with the Fenwicks³ in the neighbourhood until after my return from Gippsland in fine⁴ till 19 March.⁵

[new page]

(In continuation)

31) I left dear S. and the two little girls⁶ established in the cottage at the Heads. Started 2pm (28th Feb.) and alone to Dandenong Bridge - Dana⁷ and the Police⁸ - to Mantons⁹ 20 m further where we found

³Fairfax Fenwick was a squatter with a cattle run within the County of Grant, Parish of Paywit. According to Barry Hill, Fairfax 'put a fence across the Narrows and made the Queenscliff scrub his paddock' and built a cottage there on the main hill of the town, 'placing it beautifully to look north-east over Swan Bay and Port Phillip Bay towards Melbourne'. Hill records that by 1845 La Trobe had built his own cottage next to the squatter's hut, sharing its views. Barry Hill, *The Enduring Rip: A History of Queenscliff*, p. 34.

⁴ Literally meaning, in effect until 19 March.

⁵ La Trobe returned to Melbourne on 14 March. He wrote to Governor Gipps on 16 March. It appears he stayed in Melbourne until he returned to Queenscliff on 19 March.

⁶ The two little girls were the La Trobes' daughters, Eleanora Sophia and Mary Cecilia, who were born in Melbourne in 1842 and 1843 respectively.

⁷ Dana, Henry Edward Pulteney (1820-52), *Australian Dictionary of Biography (ADB)*, Vol. 1, MUP, 1966, p. 178.

⁸ Dana had migrated to Van Diemen's Land in 1840 in the hope of being appointed to the civil service in Launceston but was unsuccessful. He moved to Port Phillip where he renewed his acquaintance with Charles Joseph La Trobe and was subsequently appointed to establish a native police corps. In February 1842 he enlisted 25 Aboriginals from western and central Gippsland at the depot at Narre Warren to train for mounted police duty. His management of the native police corps was, overall, considered to be useful, the troopers rendering valuable service to the squatters and the administration of the fledgling colony. *ADB*, op.cit., pp. 278-9.

⁹ Charles and Frederick Manton had arrived in Port Phillip in 1840. Their property, Manton's Old Station (Field's Station or Tooradan), was Licensed Run No. 215 which they held from 1840-6. The 16,000 acre property ran 1,600 cattle on the north short of Western Port Bay, adjoining Tooradin. Billis & Kenyon, *Pastoral Pioneers of Port Phillip*, Stockland Press, Melbourne 1974, p. 240.

Powlett¹⁰ encamped - (Aunt Mary & Dermot ashore) - disturbed night.

1 Mar. To the shore of W[estern] Port and the Inlets¹¹ - Cockayne a character.¹² Powlett's henchman! (Johnson a dandy) - pull against wind to Sandy Point¹³ opposite Mundy's Station.¹⁴ Settlement Point. Landed and waited turn of tide to enter Bass River¹⁵ tho[ugh]. P[owlett] & I went on foot a mile or two to station and met Mr Cobb¹⁶ who got us a couple of horses to go by land to Thoms (Massie & Anderson) 5m. Furlong's¹⁷ garden, grapes, apples - quail shooting - Capt'n Harrison's camp¹⁸ Thom a shrewd old Scot. Mr Walsh arrives with N[ative]. Police.

¹⁰ Frederick Armand Powlett (1811-65) born in Shropshire, the son of a chaplain to the Prince Regent, Powlett had accompanied Sir John Franklin to Van Diemen's Land in 1837. He became a police magistrate after moving to Port Phillip, and was instrumental in the formation of the Melbourne Cricket Club. In 1840 he was appointed Commissioner for the Western Port District and remained in this position until gold was discovered. He then became the first gold commissioner in Victoria but relinquished the position; he was temporarily appointed colonial treasurer. Powlett's next appointment was as chief commissioner of crown lands, until the position was abolished in 1860 while he was absent in England. At the time of La Trobe's visit to Western Port, Powlett was Commissioner of Crown Lands. Until his death in 1865 he was Police Magistrate at Kyneton. *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol 1, MUP, 1966, p. 349.

¹¹ The Inlets, a squatting run, is marked on an 1870 *Map of the Colony of Victoria* at the Rutherford Creek on the north shore of Western Port Bay, Billis & Kenyon, p.223.

¹² Edwin Cockayne, squatter, established the property The Inlets, 1845-52 on the north shore of Westernport Bay, *Pastoral Pioneers*, p. 48, p. 223.

¹³ La Trobe's drawing notes The Inlets and Ballock River but no notation for Sandy Point or Settlement Point.

¹⁴ Fitzherbert Miller Mundy, born 1810 in England was an overlander who arrived in Western Port in 1838, secured pre-emptive right No. 138 at Pyalong, a property of 20,000 acres carrying 20,000 sheep. *Pastoral Pioneers* p. 118 and pp.267-8.

¹⁵ Settlement Point at the township of current day Corinella is the closest point to French Island. The Bass River enters Western Port Bay at Bass below Settlement Point.

¹⁶ This may be Thomas William Cobb, one of the Cobb brothers of Sutton Grange, W.P. No. 161. *Pastoral Pioneers* p. 48 and p. 283.

¹⁷ Furlong's garden - unsure who this is. Furlong does not appear in Billis & Kenyon's *Pastoral Pioneers*, nor Paul de Serville's, *Pounds and Pedigrees*.

¹⁸ Captain John Harrison was an overlander who arrived in the Port Phillip District in 1838.

2 [Mar] Start early - Powlett & Mr Bourne (Pyramus)¹⁹ accompany us to Chisholms 9 m - in a coach - 2nd river. The wild cattle 400 about²⁰ - visits of their bulls occasionally to the herd at Bass River - curious country. Open scrub. Dwarf gum bush - and occasional strips of forest - track to north of circular clump [seen] from all sides 30 m to Tarwan [*sic*]. Townsend²¹ or Lizard Point, Cape Liptrap coast in distance - pass creek with 3 branches and over open elevated hummock to head of Andersons Inlet²² and banks of the Tarwan.²³ Andersons Inlet separated by only a strip of sand hills from the sea - about 100 yards wide no punt and neither grass nor water. Dilemma. 2 men taken without punt. (Bill & Kelly) Swam over 7 horses and got over baggage. Missed the track to swamp with water and after dark had to bring up on edge of thick scrub, somewhere back of Cape Liptrap X [and] tethering the horses, turn in waterless and supperless. Our party, Dana and self - McGregor. Black police man and boy. I rode Blacky and Noggy carried our pack. A

¹⁹ *Pyramus* was the ship which brought the La Trobe family and other early settlers from Sydney to Melbourne in September 1839.

²⁰ Wild cattle are marked on both La Trobe's drawing of his trip (Copy of 'Tracing sent by His Excellency the Governor to be copied, shewing the Track of his Honour, Mr La Trobe and Mr Tyers 1845, Coast Survey No. 43B', Map Collection, State Library of Victoria) and Billis & Kenyon's plan of the Port Phillip District showing pastoral runs.

²¹ Townsends Point or Lizard Point, possibly named after Edward Townsend who arrived as overlander, November 1839, *Pastoral Pioneers*, p. 151.

²² Samuel Anderson (1803-63) born in Kircudbright, Scotland, was a journalist who arrived in Van Diemen's Land in 1834 and sailed to Western Port Bay in 1835 where he began an agricultural settlement on the Bass River. He established a flour mill, salt works and orchard, and discovered an inlet which was named after him, Anderson's Inlet. He also found coal at Cape Patterson in 1837, grew wheat on land held under a pastoral licence between Griffith's Point (now San Remo) and Old Settlement Point (present day Corinella). He bought the freehold of part of his squattage in 1854, and with his brothers, pioneered agricultural methods. The locality of Anderson is named after the family.

<http://www.asap.unimelb.edu.au/fbsparcsibiogs>

²³ Note that throughout the text, La Trobe's spelling of this river and location is Tarwan. It has since been changed to Tarwin.

strange night - cattle all round and sure that we were near water - but where?

3rd Track back to Tarwan, wandering, and find proper track and swamp ¼ mile from our camp at The Scrub. The Bald Hill. Hoddle's Range²⁴ - Wanderings. Blackys overthrow* - gully with cool water 2 pm. S[outh]. ridge of Hoddle's Range. View of Wilsons Promontory. Encamped after dark on what we took to be the First river. Bad crossing - but found water.

4[th] Early start thro' forest and hour after come to brink of the real First river (called by me the Franklin) our surprise and dismay - Kelly or Bills exclamation of the swing.²⁵ (It would float the Royal George)²⁶ A tidal stream. Precipitous bank of 20 feet perpendicular. 60 yards broad. Set to work and got horses and baggage and selves across. 10 mile further n[orth] of Corner Inlet.²⁷ Second river (called by me the Agnes). Third stream and then more open country - to banks of the Albert 1/2 p.2 [half past two]. The Shipping Place Inn. Tyers. Raymond, McMillan. McAllister, Marley - dine and sleep there.

5 [Mar]. Busy at the Port [Albert] and vicinity - 6th [Mar] Carried forward to Raymonds crossing the La Trobe River - Foster's run.²⁸ 7 [Mar]. Providence Ponds. Dunlop River. Thom's, McLeod - Eagle Point the B. pol. Station on Lake King.²⁹

8 [Mar]. McLeods and Loughnans. Raymonds & McAllisters. Miss[ed]

* See letter to Peter La Trobe, 6 April 1845, SLV H6976,

²⁴ Small quantities of gold were found in the Hoddle Ranges in the 1860s.

²⁵ The swing of the river at Welshpool.

²⁶ The Royal George was a notable ship, commissioned in Britain in 1746, which took part in the Seven Years War against the French.

²⁷ Corner Inlet is east of Cape Liptrap.

²⁸ This is not listed as a pastoral run and as yet I have been unable to determine who Foster was.

²⁹ Where he has written 'b. police meaning 'black police', he is referring to the Native Police station at Lake Tyers.

McFarlane.³⁰ Rob Thomson. Uproarious Highland evening. The view of the distant range - Mt Gisborne. Cruchan. Glenmaggie. Baw Baw. 3 chains overlapping. McFarlane and McAllisters conversation in the dark.

9 [Mar] To Tara Ridge/Reeves³¹/Kings on the La Trobe River remain here (Reeves) the rest of the day.

(32 Continued)

10 [Mar] To Baylis³² & on to Taraville [sic] and camp by the Albert.

11 [Mar] Back journey Dana, self & Tuckanong. Tyers with two troopers and pack horse (old Boxer) and pass the three creeks. Paynton (?), Agnes and Franklin in good time & reach foot of Hoddle's Range where we camp.

12th The Bald Hill. The Swamp & on to the Tarwan. Terrible hot wind and high tide 4 hours hard work scarcely sufficed to get 9 horses and all the baggage over - flooded flats - sudden change of wind - rain - get on till we could do no more and then camp without shelter or water in burned forest. Terrible thirst & complete soaking.

13 Off at day break - cross the hummock and ugly creek near entrance of Andersons Inlet and fortunately hit upon a native well where we halt and forget our nights miseries. Get on the Chisholms Sta. where Dana and I leave the party to camp. Rest and follow at leisure. Thoms. Capt'n Harrison's no fresh horses - push on under old Thoms guidance over the Hurdy Gurdys where we lose the road after dark and do not make Mantons without great difficulty after 9 pm.

14th Up early and with Martin to Yallock (Jamieson). The Inlets, finding old Cockayne

³⁰ La Trobe did not arrive in time to see pastoralist James MacFarlane who had a property with L McAlister from 1841-59.

³¹ Reeve's Special Survey.

³² Edw. Bayliss of Monaro, Snowy River, Jan. 1837 - Buchan, early 1839; Merton, Oct. 1843 to April 1866, p. 23.

taken to M[elbourne] in charge of Capt'n Harrison. Difficult crossing. Fresh horses meet us here and by dint of steady riding complete the 21 m to Dandenong Bridge and 20 m home before 2 pm.

Distances as then understood:

Melbourne to Dandenong	21	The Franklin	25
Manton by Ruffys	20	Agnes River	10
The Inlets	7	Albert	25
Martins	7	Shipping Port	5
Massie & Andersons	20	Taraville to Bruthen	17
Chisholms	9	Scots. Merriman's Creek	16
The Tarwan		Campbells La Trobe River	10
Fosters	7		
Fosters to Raymonds	18		
Police Stn to Eagle Pt	34 land 45 water		
Loughnans	14		
McAllisters	36		
McAllisters to Campbell	24 and 67	to Taraville	
Ditto to Snake Ridge/Reeves			26
Ditto by Kings & Pearsons			32
From Reeves by Baylis to Taraville			50

This is the conclusion of La Trobe's journal for his first journey through Gippsland. La Trobe travelled from 28 February to 14 March 1845. In his letter to Governor Gipps dated 16 March 1845, he reported on the mileage he had covered. From Melbourne to Dandenong Bridge, then south to Western Port Bay and the Inlets, then cross-country to Tarwin and Port Albert, the return journey covered almost 750 miles, in the course of which La Trobe named two rivers.

Fay Woodhouse

References

- Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. 1, 1966, Vol. 2, 1967, Vol. 4, 1972 Melbourne University Press, Carlton.
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- C J La Trobe Memoranda of Correspondence 1839-1851. Memoranda of Journeys, Excursions & Absences 1839-1854, MS H15604*, La Trobe Manuscripts Collection State Library of Victoria.
- de Serville, Paul, *Pounds and Pedigrees*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 1991.
- Shaw, A G L, *Gipps-La Trobe Correspondence 1839-1846*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1989.

The second contribution is an article by Peter Alsop, detailing La Trobe's presence in and travel through the Geelong district, as well as points in the landscape that were directly influenced by his planning and forethought.

Charles Joseph La Trobe and Geelong

The date 30 March 1901, the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of C J La Trobe, probably passed with little notice in Victoria, preoccupied with its change from a Colony to a position of prominence in the new Federation of Australia, saddened by the death of the Queen and by the war in South Africa.

La Trobe's work in laying the foundations were largely forgotten. However, the one hundredth anniversary of his death in 1975 saw a flurry of activity at a State level to record and mark La Trobe's career.

In the Geelong region Queenscliff, Cape Otway and Geelong itself saw events which marked La Trobe's influence in the region. At St George's Church, Queenscliff on 7 December a tablet was unveiled to mark the site of La Trobe's holiday cottage.

At Cape Otway on 13 December another unveiling celebrated the building of the lighthouse. On 14 December the then State Historian, Mr Les Blake, unveiled a memorial tablet to La Trobe in the Geelong Botanic Gardens and the Mayor of Geelong, Cr J N Holt, re-opened the original customs house and telegraph office which had been restored for the occasion. This prefabricated hut had been sent from Sydney and had been in Geelong since 1838. When La Trobe arrived in October of the following year as Superintendent of the Port Phillip District of New South Wales, Melbourne was an infant settlement while Geelong and Portland were little more than beach heads.

La Trobe soon set about travelling extensively around the District he was to administer. His very first excursion in February 1840 was to Geelong in company with H W H Smythe, the surveyor who had laid out the town and its associated village reserve of Fyansford.

Riding with them was Nicholas Fenwick whom La Trobe had installed as Geelong's second Police Magistrate who succeeded Captain Foster Fyans after his appointment as Commissioner of Crown Lands for Portland Bay. At Geelong he rode to Point Henry and Buckley's cave on the Barwon River. On 17 February 1840 he went on to Hurst and Tuckfield's Barwon Mission Station on the Barwon near Birregurra. Later in the year, on 24 November, with Lonsdale and Charles Tyers, he climbed Station Peak in the You Yangs, so named by Matthew Flinders who used it as a survey station in 1802 but which is now known as Flinders Peak in his honour.

The year 1841 saw the start of the Depression. In January La Trobe visited Geelong and went on to Indented Head (Bellarine Peninsula) and Shortlands Bluff (Queenscliff). In July he again visited the Barwon Mission Station and then on into the Otway Ranges on 2 July. Back in Geelong by 6 July, he returned to Melbourne by the steamer *Aphrasia*. Journeys to the Otways and Queenscliff were to figure prominently in La Trobe's peregrinations. In October 1841 Governor Gipps visited Port Phillip District. On 26 October the official party steamed down the bay on *Aphrasia* to Geelong where visits were made to Fyansford, Barrabool Hills and Corio (Geelong).

In January 1842 he passed through Geelong on his way to Murray's Station at Colac, to Corangamite and the Border Police Station, La Trobe having just appointed Henry Edward Pulteney Dana to establish the Native Police Corps. The return journey brought him through the Weatherboard Station at Inverleigh, thence to the Moorabool River just west of Geelong. On 17 September he came to Geelong and with Nicholas Fenwick visited the mouth of the Barwon River at Barwon Heads and then went on to Shortland's Bluff (Queenscliff).

The following year, in February 1843, La Trobe rode through Geelong on his way to Lake Colac and other parts of the Western District. In February 1844 his wife Sophie and the children went to Queenscliff for a holiday. La Trobe had a cottage here from 1844 to 1848 which he himself helped to build. In April he was again in Geelong and rode on to Portland. In August he was at Queenscliff for three days: in Geelong on 17

October on his way to the Buntingdale Aboriginal Mission and again at Queenscliff for three days in December working on his cottage.

For most of January and February 1845 he was at Queenscliff and in October he again attempted to reach Cape Otway. He did not succeed in this until 2 April 1846, on his third attempt. On his way home he spent a few days at his cottage recuperating from this arduous journey. June, July and September saw him again in Geelong and he again climbed Station Peak on 15 September. The vineyards of the Barrabool Hills were visited on 11 December. Most of April 1848 was spent in Geelong in which month he removed his cottage from Queenscliff to his property at Jolimont.

From 1-14 December 1848 La Trobe was in Geelong, and again on 20 January 1849 he came to Geelong with Dana en route to Cape Otway to view the lighthouse. For most of May 1849 La Trobe was in Geelong. On 23 November he went to the Heads and Geelong, returning on 28 November but was blocked by a flood in the Werribee River, forcing him to return to Geelong. He was briefly in Geelong on 8 March on his way to Colac and other parts of the Western District with Dana as his companion.

On 1 January 1851, La Trobe was appointed Lieutenant-Governor of the new Colony of Victoria as from 1 July. His official visit to Geelong as Lieutenant-Governor was made from 25 September. The district did not see him again until 28 October 1853 when he was at Queenscliff, but he returned to Geelong on 28 January 1854 with Captain J Le M Carey, where they had dinner with Claud Farie, Taddy Thomson and others. On 30 January he went to Queenscliff with Carey. This was the same day that Sophie La Trobe died at Neuchâtel. La Trobe had despatched his resignation to England in December 1852. On 6 May 1854 La Trobe saw Queenscliff for the last time from the deck of the steamship *Golden Age* as it steamed through the Heads carrying him back to England, 14 years, 7 months and 6 days after he arrived in Port Phillip.

In a pioneer society it is necessary to give a good deal of attention to public works. La Trobe was fortunate in having a competent bridge builder-engineer available in the person of David Lennox, a Scot, who was sent from Sydney in 1844

to design and build Princes Bridge, Melbourne. La Trobe opened this magnificent 150 ft span stone arch bridge on 15 November 1850. Lennox's title was Superintendent of Bridges but his work embraced not only bridges but wharves, piers, dams, roads, water supply and even, on occasions, some of the public buildings. La Trobe, on his journeys to Geelong, would have used Lennox's bridge over the Werribee River and would have inspected his work on Geelong's wharves, the first bridge over the Barwon River at Moorabool Street (1848) and his improvements to Fyans's Breakwater on the Barwon River (1845-49). In providing funds for such works, La Trobe had to deal with the penny-pinching attitude of a thrifty Government remote in Sydney. During the gold rushes La Trobe was faced with the inadequacy of the roads and bridges to handle the volume of traffic and the situation was made worse in May 1852 when widespread floods occurred throughout Victoria which destroyed, or severely damaged, many of the bridges including those at Werribee, Geelong and Batesford. Three events in particular connect La Trobe with Geelong. It seems that in 1846 on one of his visits to Geelong La Trobe was shown a bunch of keys that had been found in a lime kiln near Limeburners Point on Corio Bay some fifteen feet below ground level. La Trobe was puzzled by this, at first thinking the land had risen at some period in the past but later believing it had sunk and wondering how long it would have taken fifteen feet of soil to accumulate over the old beach where the keys had been allegedly dropped. In recent years the keys (which no-one has ever seen since 1846) have been linked to an alleged Portuguese presence in Corio Bay in the 16th Century - a completely fictitious voyage. It can be shown that the keys were not an in-situ artefact. The first people to visit Geelong, who came from a society which uses keys, were the botanist James Fleming and the surveyor-explorer Charles Grimes on 12 January 1803. They actually stopped at this very spot but they did not drop any keys.

But it was La Trobe's interest in the keys and the area of Limeburners Point that led to the second event, the creation of Geelong's Botanic Gardens and Eastern Park. Preliminary moves were made in 1848 when La Trobe chose an area, roughly equivalent to today's Johnstone Park in central Geelong, which had been recommended by

Lennox and which, on La Trobe's orders, was surveyed by W S Urquhart in 1848. Urquhart doubled the area recommended by Lennox. But La Trobe evidently thought a better site for a Town Park and Public Gardens was available in the Limeburners Point area. A J Skene was ordered by La Trobe on 29 June 1851 to mark out this area of some 192 acres. La Trobe subsequently appointed a local committee to establish the gardens. The Botanic Gardens were formally surrendered to the Corporation of Geelong for future management in 1874, the year before La Trobe died. Geelong's citizens and visitors are the grateful beneficiaries of La Trobe's foresight in providing such a magnificent site for a park and botanic gardens.

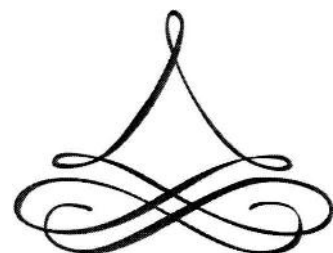
The third location that has La Trobe links is the intersection of Gheringhap Street and Malop Street near the Geelong City Hall. Johnstone Park is on the west side of Gheringhap Street at this point which is still known locally as The Roundabout because, although there are now scores of roundabouts in Geelong, this was the first. What is not generally known or realised is that the roundabout sits on the crest of an earthen embankment which, in former times, was known as La Trobe's Dam. A large bronze plaque mounted on a concrete pedestal in the park near the footpath in Gheringhap Street commemorates the Dam.

A street in an 1850s subdivision in Geelong West was given his name but this was changed some forty or more years ago. However a principal thoroughfare of the city which at present carries the Princes Highway still bears his name as originally designated and correctly spelt - La Trobe Terrace.

The tangible markers to Charles Joseph La Trobe in and around Geelong serve to remind us of a man who greatly advanced the welfare of Geelong and its district.

Peter F B Alsop,

President, Geelong Historical Society



In the third article, Dianne Reilly examines La Trobe's exploration of Cape Otway.

La Trobe's Discovery of Cape Otway

The treacherous waters around Cape Otway on the south-western coast of Australia, and around King Island off the north-west of Tasmania have long provided a perilous introduction to a new land for new emigrants. In the years of La Trobe's residence in Australia from 1839 to 1854, at least four sailing ships failed to negotiate the entrance to Bass Strait with terrible loss of life. These included *Rebecca* (1843), *Cataraqui* (1845), *Brahmin* (1854) and *Waterwitch* (1854), which went down in Bass Strait before La Trobe could have a lighthouse erected on Cape Otway to guide them to a safe harbour. Previously, many other vessels had foundered just as their long voyages seemed to be coming to an end.

Ships bearing new settlers to the Port Phillip District usually approached their landfall from a westerly direction, and by necessity had to come into Port Phillip Bay through Bass Strait.

Explorers George Bass and Mathew Flinders had located the Strait in 1798, this discovery promising to cut nearly seven hundred miles off the very long journey from England to Sydney.

Not only was the southern coast of Australia a treacherous one, but after a voyage sometimes taking six months, crew fatigue and frequently stormy weather were not conducive to easily locating 'first landfall, Otway!'

The Straits were dangerous from the point of view of navigation; and there was also the constant threat of pirates, 'Straitsmen wreckers' who would waylay a vessel and pillage its cargo.

In the years before Melbourne was founded, and before serious consideration could be given to erecting a landfall lighthouse, Bass Strait saw a considerable amount of shipping. Many of these early ships were convict transports. It is remarkable that few of them were lost. Probably this was because their masters, unlike ships captains of later years, were not hard pressed to make fast passages and therefore tended to hug the mainland coast and not proceed until they were sure of their position.

There was one fearful exception to this relatively good record: in 1835, a month before the arrival of John Batman in Port Phillip, the transport *Neva*, bringing an unfortunate cargo of convict women and their children from Cork, was totally lost on King Island. Only twenty-two of her complement

of 241 made it shore, seven of these dying of starvation before help could arrive.

In 1841 Sir John Franklin, Lieutenant-Governor of Van Diemen's Land, urged the Government of New South Wales to consider the erection of lighthouses in Bass Strait. The Select Committee which ensued recommended King Island in preference to Cape Otway as the place for a guiding light to the western entrance, but the idea was abandoned due to the depressed state of the economy at the time.

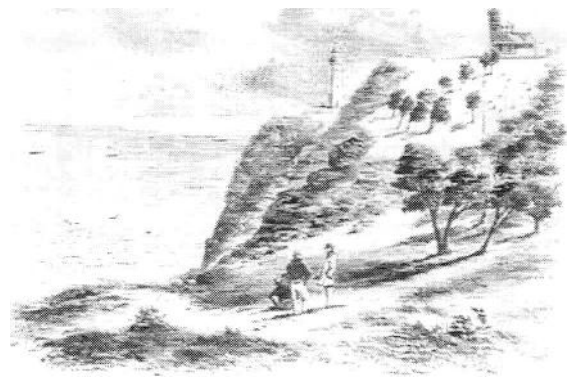


Figure 1

Robert Bruce, Watercolour Cape Otway, 1865.
Source: La Trobe Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria

King Island had to wait a further twenty years for the light on Cape Wickham to be installed.

La Trobe was acutely aware of the need for a lighthouse at Cape Otway from the time of his arrival, but the Great Southern Forest and the Barrier Range - later the Otway Forest and the Otway Ranges - had not yet been explored or penetrated to the coast.

The catastrophic wreck of the *Cataraqui* was the type of disaster of which La Trobe must have lived in dread. An emigrant ship, bound from Liverpool to Melbourne, the vessel had sailed for several days before a storm. She carried 370 passengers and a crew of thirty-eight. On the evening of 3 August 1845, knowing that he must be nearing the entrance to Bass Strait, the captain shortened sail, apparently hoping to establish his position at dawn before proceeding to port. There was some pressure on him to end the journey as quickly as possible after such long a time at sea, and he made the decision to put on sail and continue through the night. Before dawn, the *Cataraqui* struck the south-western end of

King Island. While there were 408 passengers and crew on board, only nine reached shore alive.

In Melbourne the many detractors of La Trobe did not hesitate to blame him for this worst of shipwrecks. When news of the disaster reached England, the Admiralty issued warnings against the use of Bass Strait:

Each year has been marked by more or less loss of life, and the last mail from Sydney adds to the catalogue an account of the wreck of the *Cataraqui*... My lords will consider it their duty to prevent transports with troops or convicts to attempt navigating the said straits till lighthouses have been built and they would recommend that emigrant ships also be prohibited from navigating them for the same period.³³

Although the Select Committee of 1841 had expressed the preference for a lighthouse on King Island, Cape Otway was now in 1845 recommended as the place for a landfall light. This was most probably because mariners preferred to follow closely the commanding mainland coastline from the west, since King Island is situated comparatively low in the sea and Cape Wickham on its northernmost tip is buttressed by outlying reefs.

La Trobe was now urged by the Governor in Sydney to find a route to Cape Otway since the erection of a lighthouse there was a high priority. He hardly needed urging since twice in that year, he had taken exploration parties into the Great Southern Forest, and on both occasions returned with his horses exhausted. The forest was so dense and often, the mountain ranges were so steep that the horses could not be ridden. Thick undergrowth hampered progress and visibility was reduced to a few yards, due to the luxuriant canopy of trees above.

The first of La Trobe's three attempts to blaze a trail to the Cape took place on 2 December 1845 when he recorded in his diary 'An attempt to reach Cape Otway by East coast, tho' clung to till this very evening, being finally abandoned on good grounds'.³⁴ The second assault on this difficult terrain was on 6 December that same year when he wrote:

Up and off early over the heathy and scrubby back of Moonlight Head into the forest where, in perfect miscalculation of distance from the Cape and difficulties in the way, we fasten our horses and start without provisions. Fight our way by following native track and Tommy many miles through the scrub, ascending a

range, till we come to a dead halt at the edge of an impenetrable scrub of mimosa where all indications of passage fail, and Tommy sulks. After many trials to get forward, we come to the decision, however unwillingly, that we were beaten, and must return.³⁵

On 2 April 1846, on a third attempt, La Trobe reached the Cape on foot by skirting the forest to the west. On this excursion, he went right out onto the cape: '... we have really found Cape Otway. Receding line of coast on both sides - E. to Cape Patten and W. to Moonlight Head'.³⁶ La Trobe was of the opinion that 'the brink of the precipitous face of the Southern point of the promontory furnishes, as it appears to me, an admirable site for the projected lighthouse'. However, he did realise that the route he had taken was far from practical for the transport of building materials.

He appointed 'Mr Allan of the Hopkins' as leader of a party to find an easier route to the Cape. Success was eventually achieved since, on 21 May, La Trobe wrote to the Colonial Secretary that

there is no great difficulty at present in connecting with the Cape by land, by following the track cut through the dense scrub to the Northward by Mr Roadknight of Geelong in the course of last winter!³⁷

George Smythe had also surveyed the coast from the sea and had made a detailed survey of Cape Otway itself to determine a landing place.

With the 'road' put through, La Trobe was ready to build the lighthouse. In October 1846 the tender of Alexander McGillivray was accepted and work was begun.

In November 1847 two men were sent overland with bullock drays. At about the same time a working party of forty-three tradesmen left Geelong in the schooner *Teazer*. The Melbourne *Argus* reported the venture:

The master of the vessel, Captain Rogers, while endeavouring to find a landing place was left on shore with his boat's crew, a gale having sprung up which prevented his rejoining the vessel. Next day, the master and his crew put off their boat although the weather was far from favourable. Unfortunately, in passing through the surf the boat was upset

³³ Don Charlwood, *Wrecks and Reputations*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1977, p. 8.

³⁴ Memoranda of 'Journeys, Excursions and Absences, 1839-54', 2 December 1845, MS 10913.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 6 December 1845.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 2 April 1846.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 21 May 1846.

and the master was drowned; the other men were able to reach the shore.³⁸

The workmen were landed and construction of the lighthouse was able to begin. The construction has a relatively short shaft of fifty-two feet since the cliffs on which it was built are over 250 feet high. It was constructed of sandstone quarried at the Parker River, three miles to the east, and hauled to the site by bullock teams. On 7 September 1848, La Trobe wrote again to the Colonial Secretary, 'reporting completion of Cape Otway Lighthouse!,'³⁹The lantern, 'manufactured by Mr Wilkins of London who made the lantern in use in Eddystone lighthouse',⁴⁰ was delivered and landed through the surf. It was erected three hundred feet above the sea and on 29 August 1848 was lit for the first time.

In 1851, the year of the Ballarat gold discoveries, 712 ships arrived in Victoria and, in the next year, 1,657 ships arrived safely bearing emigrants seeking their fortune on the goldfields.

Although La Trobe was seriously challenged to maintain and build on the infrastructure he had established in Melbourne during this turbulent period, the entrance to Bass Strait and then to Port Phillip Bay was made infinitely safer by the achievement of the Cape Otway Lighthouse.

Dianne Reilly

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Argus, November 1847.

THE LIFE OF SOPHIE LA TROBE

I think it would be safe to say that all the members of the La Trobe Society feel great affection and admiration for Charles Joseph La Trobe. Thanks to the work of scholars such as Dr Davis McCaughey and our own Dr Dianne Reilly, we know a great deal about his professional and personal life. Yet his wife, Sophie, who accompanied him to the Port Phillip District in 1839, *is* not nearly so well known, and I suspect that *is* just as she would have wished it to be.

She was born Sophia de Montmollin in 1810, a member of a prominent and distinguished Swiss

patrician family. The Montmollins had been leading citizens of Neuchâtel, a picturesque little town on the French border of Switzerland, since the seventeenth century. Maurice de Tribolet, the recently retired Archiviste Cantonal of Neuchâtel, described them to me as 'big fish in a little pond'.

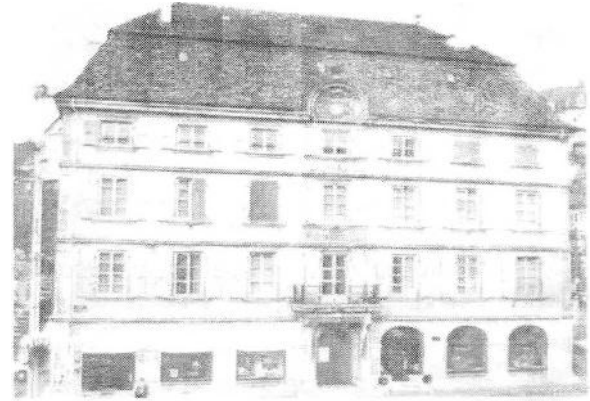


Figure 2 The house where Sophie La Trobe grew up, built on Neuchâtel's Market Square for her ancestor Georges de Montmollin in 1866.

Sophie's father, Frédéric-Auguste de Montmollin, was a member of the Council of State, the ruling body, a position that the head of the family had held for the past four generations. Her mother, born Rose-Augustine de Meuron, belonged to another patrician family. M. de Tribolet, who is himself a member of the *noblesse* (although his father wisely introduced some new blood by marrying a Swede), stressed to me that the patrician families of Neuchâtel are *very* intermarried. La Trobe described Neuchâtel with his characteristic humour - one of his most endearing qualities - as a place where cousins 'swarm like herrings in every corner of the country'.

Sophie's immediate family was enormous: she was one of sixteen children. Service to the state is one of the high ideals traditionally drummed into aristocratic children, and Sophie La Trobe would have endured many of the trials of her colonial life with this upbringing in mind.

Her small wooden house in Melbourne, which grew from the tiny prefabricated cottage the La Trobes brought with them, could not have been in greater contrast with the Montmollin family's house in Neuchâtel. La Maison Montmollin is an imposing townhouse of four storeys, built on the market square in 1686. The façade, bearing the family arms, was a strong statement of their prestige. Inside were wood-panelled rooms with parquet floors and frescoed ceilings, heated by beautiful, tiled stoves. It was a luxurious, well-ordered life, 'a servant-motored existence', as Julian Fellowes, who wrote the screenplay for *Gosford Park*, has described that distant style of living. There were certainly servants in Melbourne: the La Trobe household

³⁸ *Argus*, November 1847.

³⁹ *Memoranda* op.cit. 7 September 1848.

⁴⁰ Charlwood, op.cit., p. 11.

included a butler, housekeeper, nurse and gardener, but the conditions were vastly different.

Society too, would have been very strange. In Neuchâtel, the extended family would have made up Sophie's world almost entirely. Everyone would have been known to her, their histories, their family connections. When she first arrived in the four-year-old immigrant society of Melbourne, everyone was a stranger, and the social networks were just being established.

It was through a family connection that she had first met Charles Joseph La Trobe. He had come to live in Neuchâtel in 1824, when he was twenty-three, as tutor to Albert de Pourtalès, son of the Comte de Pourtales and one of Sophie's many cousins. At that time she was only fourteen, and it was eleven years before they married. We know almost nothing about their courtship, but La Trobe was away for quite a lot of this time, either travelling with Albert, including an extensive tour of North America and Mexico, or by himself on the mountaineering expeditions he made in the Alps during his summer holidays.

In his role as tutor, the Montmollin family would not have considered him a very suitable catch, but he set about writing a series of books about his travels which were published in London, giving him a more acceptable field of activity, if not a reliable source of income. Once the family had consented, the couple was married in the British Legation at Berne on 16 September 1835. In a private memoranda written before their marriage, La Trobe made it clear that Sophie had neither wealth nor beauty, but something else left unsaid, which we may assume to have been a fine character and a loving heart. Two charming portraits of her as a young woman are known to us, but they must have been flattering, because a colonist who met her soon after she arrived in Melbourne wrote that she was 'not pretty'. Nor would she have had a large dowry: sixteen children had strained the family fortune. Nevertheless, from the La Trobes' letters, it is clear that they married for love: Sophie was refined, gentle, sincerely religious, affectionate and devoted.

After they married they lived in La Maison Montmollin, where a daughter, Agnes, was born eighteen months later. By this time, La Trobe had begun the new career that would eventually take him and his family to Australia. When Agnes was born, he was on his way to the West Indies, sent by the British Government to inspect and report on the schools provided for the newly-emancipated slaves. His reports were so well received that, combined with some useful political patronage, they led to his appointment as Superintendent of the Port Phillip District of New South Wales. Sophie La Trobe was not an adventurous soul and must have found the prospect an alarming one. The news certainly caused a stir in Neuchâtel: Hubert de Castella, whose sister was Sophie's best friend, remembered being told as a boy 'how Mrs La Trobe would be six months on the big sea, how she was to take with her a wooden house

in her ship - to live in it in a country peopled with savages'. The Comte de Pourtales was able to reassure her: he had been at school in Switzerland with the sons of John and Elizabeth Macarthur and could paint a more inviting picture of the Antipodes.

The La Trobes certainly brought their house with them, and we are all familiar with it as it looked in its early days, moved from its original site and reconstructed by the National Trust, and now sitting closed and forlorn in the Domain between the Shrine and the Herbarium. It was originally erected about a mile east of the small township of Melbourne, north of the Yarra and north-west of the present Melbourne Cricket Ground. This was done within a fortnight of their arrival at the end of September 1839. La Trobe was clearly anxious to get his wife and daughter comfortably settled as soon as possible, and he later decided to buy the land at public auction - gaining the temporary displeasure of his superior, Sir George Gipps, the Governor of New South Wales - to avoid disrupting them again. Cynics would say that he made a good bargain - he bought the land very cheaply and was later able to live on the proceeds - but that is another story.

Sophie La Trobe was certainly a woman whose home was the centre of her affections. She does not seem to have despised her modest little house - which was enlarged repeatedly over the years - and she and her husband created an atmosphere of refinement that was appreciated by like-minded colonists. The La Trobes called their house *Jolimont* after the country house near Neuchâtel where they had spent their honeymoon.

Two years after they arrived in Melbourne they received the great blessing of a Swiss housekeeper, Charlotte Pellet, who had been a nurse in the Montmollin family. She kept everything to the highest Swiss standards, and she and her little daughter were much loved by the La Trobe family.

The La Trobes lived modestly at Jolimont, not attempting to entertain on a vice-regal scale. At first La Trobe received a salary less than a third of that paid to the contemporary Lieutenant-Governor of Van Diemen's Land, who also had a house provided. La Trobe decided, no doubt with Sophie's complete approval, that they could not afford to entertain the world and his wife, and he stuck to this in the face of increasing dissatisfaction. Nine years into his term, a public meeting was called at which he was accused of not upholding the dignity of his office, and a petition for his recall was sent to London, but the Colonial Office ignored it.

The La Trobes certainly made a circle of friends and entertained privately. On a seasonal note, they appear to have introduced the Christmas tree to Melbourne, which was the centrepiece of their children's parties. This seems to have been one legacy of Sophie La Trobe's nationality; another was the attraction of Swiss vigneron to Port Phillip. There is so much to say about this subject, and no time to say it, but we owe in

time to say it, but we owe in part the presence of a distinguished network of Swiss families who helped to establish winemaking in Victoria to the fact that Sophie La Trobe came to live here.

Three more children were born in Melbourne: two daughters, Nelly and Cecile, and a son, Charley. The La Trobes were loving parents, but they placed great emphasis on obedience and good conduct, which was usual at the time. Sophie's letters to their eldest daughter, Agnes, are affectionate but can sound very stern; brought up a Calvinist, she may have been a little dour in contrast with her husband. It was necessary to write to Agnes because she was sent back to Neuchâtel just after her eighth birthday to be brought up and educated by her grandmother and widowed aunt Rose, Sophie's youngest sister. This separation was thought to be in Agnes's best interests, but it continued much longer than anyone imagined, and caused Sophie much heartache. Agnes's portrait, painted in Neuchâtel, hung over her desk at Jolimont.

The main impression we have of Sophie La Trobe is that she was never in very good health. She was prone to headaches and was suffering from a severe one on the famous occasion when Georgiana McCrae agreed to be her substitute at the opening of Prince's Bridge. La Trobe's joke in a letter to his friend, the publisher John Murray, about standing with the head downwards 'as you know we are obliged to do here' not suiting the female constitution is even more amusing in light of the modern statue of La Trobe himself standing upside-down in the Gordon Reserve near Parliament House. In 1848 Sophie had a carriage accident which may also have caused a miscarriage. She was confined to bed for months and was never really well again.

She was also inclined to worry and was never entirely at ease during her husband's frequent absences on horseback expeditions (ninety-four by his own reckoning) that he so enjoyed. He urged her to join him when it was possible to ride in a carriage, but she seldom agreed. She had none of his curiosity about Port Phillip, and when she did cross Bass Strait, said that she preferred the scenery in Van Diemen's Land.

1851 was a momentous year for the La Trobe family. La Trobe was appointed Lieutenant-Governor of the new colony of Victoria, as the Port Phillip District became known after separation from New South Wales, and gold was discovered immediately afterwards. This caused chaos, made La Trobe's job a nightmare and gave his wife much anxiety on his behalf. She started calling Victoria 'this wretched gold country'. La Trobe submitted his resignation in December 1852, but it was almost eighteen months before he was free to leave the Colony. Against her better judgement, he persuaded Sophie to take the children to Neuchâtel without him. This she did, already gravely ill, although her husband had high hopes that the voyage and reunion with family and friends would restore her completely. Imagine his shock when he opened a London newspaper a week before he was finally to leave the Colony himself, and read his wife's

death notice. She had died in Neuchâtel just before her forty-fourth birthday.

Sophie La Trobe, our first Governor's wife, had spent a quiet, modest, mostly private family life in Victoria. Yet her husband saw the example she set 'as a good Christian wife and mother' as having been of the greatest value to the community. La Trobe was a man of the highest ideals who was concerned from the outset to create a fine and civilised society - one of the main reasons we admire him so much. He had appreciated his wife's fine character above wealth or beauty, and was convinced that her evident goodness had made her an excellent Governor's wife.

Marguerite Hancock

LATROBE STATUE FUND

As we were advised in February by the Honorary Treasurer, John Drury, the La Trobe Society has achieved tax deductibility through the Australia Cultural Fund for donations to the La Trobe Statue Fund.

The CEO and State Librarian, Ms Anne-Marie Schwirtlich has approved the donation to the State Library of Victoria of the statue from the La Trobe Society, and location on the La Trobe lawn at the Swanston/La Trobe Street corner of the Library's forecourt. The statue will be 2.55 metres high on a 450 mm granite cube and has been commissioned from the eminent sculptor and foundation member of the La Trobe Society, Peter Corlett.

The money received will be channelled through the Australia Cultural Fund to the La Trobe Society Statue Fund Account.

The aim is to raise \$90,000-100,000 for the bronze, and it is hoped to achieve the bulk of this amount from Society members. As it was one of our primary aims four years ago when the Society was established, it would be fantastic if our members themselves 'built the statue' and it was not necessary to seek funding outside the group.

Donations over \$2.00 are eligible for tax deductibility. Fill in your Donation Form today!

Hot Off the Press (literally!)

Book Review: Dianne Reilly Drury, *La Trobe: The Making of a Governor*
 MUP e-book (downloadable PDF) \$39.95
 MUP d-book (print-on-demand) \$49.95.



As readers of *La Trobeana* would know, Dianne Reilly is a highly accomplished historian, her work is scholarly and engaging, considered and thought provoking. Her latest publication, *La Trobe: The Making of a Governor*, is no exception. Published in Melbourne University Publishing's Academic Monograph Series, it was officially launched on Monday 20 March by Professor Peter McPhee, the supervisor of her PhD thesis from which the publication is derived. This is a long-awaited work on the life of Charles Joseph La Trobe - a study of his early life, his work in Victoria, and a postscript describing his later life.

To understand the legacy left by La Trobe as a result of his fifteen years of service in Port Phillip, the work investigates the nature of the man who was our first Lieutenant Governor. By examining his early life and family connections, his religious tradition and his passion for travel and enquiry, Dianne Reilly reveals a man of passion, extremes and complexities previously only hinted at and, to date, undocumented.

This work, while presenting La Trobe as a diligent yet sometimes passive character, especially in his earliest years, provides the framework to understand the man who was often seen as a snob or aloof. It builds a strong argument that La Trobe's background and heritage moulded his behaviour which was so different from that of the majority of the early settlers over whom he presided.

The turbulence and consequences of the first fifteen years of settlement, including separation from the Colony of New South Wales and the discovery of gold, could not have been guessed at by any government. While La Trobe was a relatively inexperienced career administrator, his loyalty was to his employer, sometimes to his own detriment. He eventually suffered in terms of cumulative stress and frustration and was unpopular within the Colony. On the other hand, there were moments of exhilaration and personal satisfaction in the role - he enjoyed travel and exploration of the Colony and these are documented; he encouraged the 'founding fathers' to establish cultural institutions; and decreed that extensive tracts of metropolitan, regional and rural districts were forever reserved as parks and gardens. It's quite a legacy.

This groundbreaking work utilizes material from Swiss archives never previously seen in Australia, original diaries, letters, reminiscences and artworks, that taken together, create a picture of a hitherto largely unknown character. La Trobe's reputation for aloofness was misunderstood by the general populace, and his time here must have been agonising in many ways. This aspect of the man is beautifully crafted and expertly demonstrated in this study. His actions are chronicled and analysed by the writer, and their consequences considered and weighed in light of subsequent events. Throughout much of the narrative, La Trobe can be read as a diligent and occasionally indecisive character.

This study of La Trobe concludes with a postscript, an after-word. The chapter titled 'The Aftermath of Office' is subtitled 'The Hedger's Glove' - something tossed aside when no longer required - reveals much of La Trobe's character and his view of his life and work. It is, I believe, the most poignant chapter of the book. Through her analysis, Dianne Reilly exposes the fundamental nature of La Trobe as a generally considered, even-tempered and sometimes passionate man - yet that solid, reliable character evaporates under pressure because of decisions taken prior to and shortly after his departure from Victoria. La Trobe's later life was not, perhaps, as challenging as his time in Victoria, and he may have lived to contemplate those decisions - such as marrying his deceased wife's sister - that changed his life irrevocably.

I would have liked to have seen the subject of Dianne's work published under Melbourne University Publishing's Miegunyah Press Series, as a glossy publication with a substantial number of images and illustrations. However, this was not possible. Instead, this is very much a 21st century publication. The public may purchase the book by two different methods. *La Trobe: The Making of a Governor* is downloadable as an e-book or as a d-book. What does this mean? My greatest concern with the choice of publication method is that, because it is not visible in a bookshop, fewer people will become aware of

it. To purchase the book, you must go to the internet and find the Melbourne University Publishing website (www.mup.unimelb.edu.au). At this website you will find details of e-books and d-books.

An e-book is available for purchase as an electronic document, usually in Acrobat PDF format. The Melbourne University Publishing website (www.mup.unimelb.edu.au/ebooks) states that e-books are sold online and 'cost less to produce and send than physical books' and 'MUP can provide them to you at a lower cost than the equivalent d-book'. Purchasing the link costs \$39.95 and you may print out a copy yourself.

On the other hand, d-books are perfect bound paperbacks with 'glossy covers that are produced from archived electronic files. They are produced as single units or in small print runs in a digital print on demand (POD) system'. When a customer purchases a d-book, the order is sent from MUP to their POD printer where the book is created and sent. The finished product is equivalent in quality to an off-set print book. It costs \$49.95. It is unfortunate that this style of printing allowed for only five black and white illustrations.

Nevertheless, this important work fills the major gap in our understanding of our first Lieutenant-Governor and his work during the earliest days of settlement in Victoria - and his legacies are around us still. Congratulations Dianne on the publication of this excellent book!

Fay Woodhouse



New Light on the Baron: Insights from Ferdinand von Mueller's Correspondence

Following the book launch on 6 June of *La Trobe's Jolimont: A Walk Around My Garden*, (written by Helen Botham and edited by Dianne Reilly, and with production costs funded jointly by the La Trobe Society and the Victorian Branch of the Australian Garden History Society) members may wish to remain at Mueller Hall, The Herbarium, for the first lecture in the Australian Garden History Winter Series.

Professor Rod Home will speak about the project he is leading. He is editing the massive surviving correspondence of Baron Ferdinand von Mueller. During the past few years, some 14,000 letters written by or to Baron von Mueller have been located and are in the process of being published. These materials, most of which were unknown to previous biographers

of Mueller, shed much new light on his remarkable life. In this lecture, Professor Home will discuss some of the ways in which our picture of Mueller is changed as a result and his relationship with La Trobe.

Cost: La Trobe Society Members \$15, Non-members \$20

LANDMARK TURNS LA TROBE ON HIS HEAD

April Fool's Day marked the six-month anniversary of the giant upside down statue of Lieutenant-Governor Charles La Trobe, since it was installed in Gordon Reserve, next to the new City Museum, at the corner of Spring and Collins Streets.

'Landmark', by Melbourne artist Charles Robb, forms part of the exhibition 'Making Melbourne', currently showing at City Museum at Old Treasury, Melbourne. In the six months it has been on display it has helped highlight the inappropriate way that La Trobe has gone unrecognised. The statue will remain on display until June 30.

Charles La Trobe was Victoria's first Lieutenant-Governor, who served the colony of Victoria from 1839 to 1854. The statue stands five metres high, and in every way resembles a traditional nineteenth-century bronze statue, except that La Trobe is depicted standing on his head. The work is made out of plastics and fibreglass.

Since its appearance last October the statue has drawn comments from the public such as 'It is treason', 'I am outraged' and 'Art and politics don't mix - they are completely separate'. However the statue also has many supporters, including Billy Connelly who on a recent trip to City Museum said 'I love Melbourne. Even your statues are upside-down'.

A free lecture by Charles Robb will be held on Friday 21 April at 2pm at the City Museum.

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