



THE LA TROBE SOCIETY



NATIONAL TRUST



Friends of La Trobe's Cottage

CANDLELIT CAROLS At LA TROBE'S COTTAGE

A Celebration of Melbourne's First Christmas Tree
with the *Choir of Trinity College*,
the University of Melbourne,
under the direction of
Michael Leighton Jones
21 December 2010

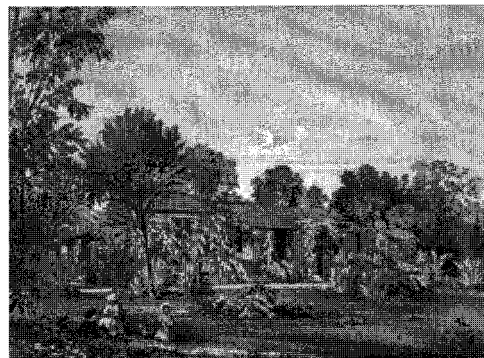


Hosted by the C J La Trobe Society Inc, Friends of
La Trobe's Cottage and National Trust of Australia (Victoria)

The La Trobe Family at Home

La Trobe's Cottage was the home of Charles Joseph La Trobe, his wife Sophie and their four children for nearly fifteen years. Initially appointed in 1839 as Superintendent of the Port Phillip District, then a part of New South Wales, La Trobe was the first Lieutenant-Governor of the new colony of Victoria after separation in 1851 until his departure from Australia in 1854.

A prefabricated building which La Trobe brought with him from England, the Cottage was originally erected on his Jolimont estate to the east of the settlement of Melbourne. While much of the building has been reconstructed, the locally built dining room (1839), the first of many additions made during La Trobe's tenure, is believed to be the oldest surviving Melbourne building.



Edward La Trobe Bateman, artist. Front view of Jolimont. 1853.
Pencil heightened with white on paper. H98.135/19. La Trobe Picture Collection.

During his administration, La Trobe made a significant contribution to the future and cultural development of the infant city of Melbourne and the colony of Victoria. He is best remembered as a pioneering administrator who came to a primitive, underdeveloped and underpopulated colony, and left it in 1854 as the then most affluent city in the world, equipped with all the advantages we appreciate in Victoria today.



MELBOURNE'S FIRST CHRISTMAS TREE

The Christmas tree was a European tradition, introduced to Melbourne by the La Trobes. In 1845, Charles Joseph La Trobe wrote to his eldest daughter, Agnes, sent home to Switzerland for her education, mentioning the family's annual children's party with a Christmas tree, and referring to a similar party they had given two years earlier in 1843.

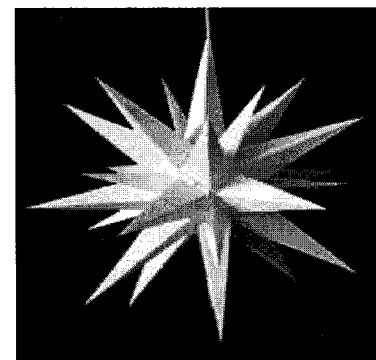
Historian Caroline Clemente wrote in 2007 in *La Trobeana*, Journal of the La Trobe Society: Popular in northern European countries, the Christmas tree was imported to the English court from Germany by Prince Albert in 1841, but was unknown outside royal circles until some years later. In 1848, the Christmas issue of the *Illustrated London News* published an illustration of the royal family gathered around a Christmas tree at Windsor Castle with the comment: As the Christmas tree is more of a German than an English custom, we present our readers with the following sketch which will throw light upon the festive purposes for which they are employed in Germany'. So at the empire's outer edge, Melbourne's own little first family initiated a custom which caught on in Britain only some years later, and proved so popular that it became an inseparable part of the traditional English Christmas.

CHRISTMAS CAROLS

The Choir of Trinity College at the University of Melbourne has built a reputation for its fine singing of music of the Anglican Cathedral tradition, from the Renaissance to the modern day. Its major weekly commitment is the singing of Evensong at 6.00pm in the College Chapel every Sunday during University terms. The Choir records, broadcasts and tours, nationally and internationally.

The Director of Music is Michael Leighton Jones, a former member of the Choirs of King's College, Cambridge and Westminster Abbey. He brings a wealth of choral and solo singing expertise, as well as teaching experience, to the position.

The Choir records regularly for ABC Classics, contributing at least one CD per year to the catalogue. Recent discs have included *Mystical Songs: The Choral Music of Ralph Vaughan Williams* - featuring the 'Five Mystical Songs' in what is believed to be the first recording of the version for solo baritone, piano quintet and chorus, and *Angel Songs* - a miscellany of choral music inspired by angels, was issued in February 2010.



THE MORAVIAN STAR

The Moravian Star is an illuminated piece of Advent or Christmas decoration popular in Germany and in places in America and Europe where there are Moravian Church congregations. The first star is known to have originated in the 1830s at a Moravian school in Germany as a geometry lesson or project. They are still made by congregations today, the most popular being the 26 point form.

The Moravian Star continues to be a popular Christmas and Advent decoration throughout the world.

The La Trobe family were members of this church so a Moravian Star would, no doubt, have enjoyed pride of place at the very top of their Christmas Tree.



Santa La Trobe by Michael Lindell

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