



Newsletter No 51

1 July 2024

It was great to see so many of you at our End-of-Season meeting on 23 April at Domain House. Thanks to you all for coming and for your contributions to the meeting.

At our meeting concerns were raised about the care of the newly restored portraits, with regard to the cold and damp environment within the Cottage, which has re-appeared with the arrival of winter. Katie Potter, NTAV Collections Manager, placed a humidity monitor in the Cottage which revealed an alarmingly high humidity level. She has now installed three dehumidifiers which can reduce the relative humidity. The Management Team members are calling in regularly over the winter months (daily in recent weeks) to monitor the humidity levels as indicated, and manage the dehumidifiers.

We ended our Open season with a flourish with 20 and 26 visitors on the last two Sundays in April, which corresponded with the Heritage Festival, and on Sunday 28 April we said good-bye to guide Catherine Gay. With her interest in the needlework samplers in the Cottage collection, Catherine has been a valuable member of the guide team, and through her interest a framed reproduction of a sampler worked by Rose Pellet now hangs in the servants' bedroom. At the La Trobe birthday event in March 2023, she gave a fascinating talk about the Cottage samplers. Catherine is moving to Canberra, where she will take up the role of Assistant Curator at the Australian War Memorial. She will be back in Melbourne briefly at the opening of a new exhibition at Como House - Traces of Girlhood in the House of Discovery (23 August - 20 October) which she is co-curating. We wish her well and thank her for her great service to La Trobe's Cottage.



Volunteer Darshana Thapa is helping Alexis with the conservation cleaning of items in the Cottage. At the April Working Bee they blacked all the pots in the kitchen and they are now gleaming: Charlotte Pellet would have been thrilled! Shana, a post-graduate student in Urban and Cultural Heritage at the University of Melbourne's School of Architecture, has been awarded a scholarship to attend The King's Foundation Summer School at Dumfries House in Scotland this month where she will study traditional building materials and techniques. Congratulations Shana!

Peter Jewell has recorded the fifth and final interview in the La Trobe's Cottage Podcast Series. The series is: 1. Governor La Trobe (Dianne Reilly); 2. The buildings (John Botham); 3. The garden (Helen Botham); 4. The volunteer group (Neville Jarvis); 5. The Collection (Katie Potter). Helen Armstrong, along with John Botham, is now in discussion with Peter and with Andrew Victorsen, NTAV's Marketing Advisor, to investigate how these podcasts can be made available on a suitable platform.

Cottage Management Team					
Liaison	Helen Botham	0447 018224	Maintenance	Colin Mickleburgh	0423 114619
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There have been some special visitors to the Cottage recently. On 25 May, a descendant of Rev. Benjamin La Trobe, La Trobe's grandfather, visited the Cottage. Alice La Trobe Bateman was shown through the Cottage by Helen Armstrong, who also informed her about her relation, Edward La Trobe Bateman, about whom she appeared not to know very much. She was delighted with the visit.



Alice La Trobe Bateman



Government House visitors with Cottage guide Irene Kearsey.

On 3 June, a group of twelve Government House staff members took a tour of the Cottage. Government House has been helpful in recent months with regard to our Combined Tours and have agreed to two tours taking place concurrently on the first Monday of the month – one group of twenty people starting at La Trobe's Cottage, another starting at Government House, and then the two groups swapping via the back entrance of Government House to facilitate easier access to and from the Cottage. The first of the concurrent tours took place on 1 July.

On Thursday 27 June thirteen volunteers visited the Waller House in Ivanhoe. This property managed by the National Trust is not currently open to the public, but much work is going on to restore and maintain it. We were privileged to be shown through the house, and to be told its history, by Sam Westbrook, NTAV Executive Manager, Conservation and Advocacy, and Waller House Coordinator. We were enthralled by her stories of notable members of the Arts World of the day who were known to Napier and Christian Waller, and of the building of the various eclectic studios and extensions to the house over the years. The fine sunny weather enabled us to enjoy the morning tea provided as we looked out over the gum-tree lined valley of Darebin Creek – a magnificent setting. We thank Sam for giving us this most interesting and enjoyable visit.



Many thanks to those who have volunteered to help with our Open House Melbourne day on Sunday 28 July. Lindy Golding, who is managing the roster, will be in touch with you shortly. There will be a Working Bee to prepare the Cottage and Garden for the event on Tuesday 23 July, 9.30 – 12.15. We'd be pleased to see anyone who'd like to help for some or all of that time.

There is to be an interesting La Trobe Society event as part of Rare Book Week on Thursday 18 July 6-8pm at Tonic House, 386 Flinders Lane, Melbourne (no charge). Shane Carmody will speak on 'Noted Donations to the Melbourne Public Library'. You'll need to book at www.latrobesociety.org.au/rare-book-week-lecture-2.

Please remember that our Pre-Season meeting will be held on Thursday 5 September at 10.00am on Zoom. We'll be in touch closer to the time about this.

Best wishes from the Cottage Management Team.