



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

Volume 3, No.3

November 2005

ISSN 1447-4026

EVENTS CALENDAR 2005-2006

DECEMBER

9 December 2005

Christmas Cocktails

**Lyceum Club, Ridgeway Place,
Melbourne**

Dr Marguerite Hancock will speak on

'The World of Sophie La Trobe'.

\$35 per head Members

\$40 per head Guests/non-Members

RSVP: 9646 2112: 8 December 2005.

2006 THE YEAR OF LA TROBE

As reported, the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) has proclaimed 2006 'The Year of La Trobe' both to celebrate the Trust's 50th Anniversary, and to commemorate the major contribution made by Charles Joseph La Trobe to the development of Victoria.

A number of events are at the planning stage, and La Trobe Society members will be notified of dates and venues in due course.

... Continued ... back page.

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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.

Committee

President: Mr Rodney Davison, AO, OBE.

Vice President: Ms Susan Priestley

Treasurer: Mr John Drury

Secretary: Dr Dianne Reilly

Members: Professor John Barnes
Dr Fay Woodhouse

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A Word from the President Rodney Davidson, AO, OBE

We have very exciting plans for 2006 which the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) is declaring the **Year of La Trobe**. The draft program is outlined in this edition of *La Trobeana*.

During the year we will be having a special membership drive. A new membership brochure is about to be printed and copies will be sent to all members. We hope you will all try to get at least one of your friends to join. The more members we have the stronger our voice will be with the Government and its departments, and with local Government, and the more we will be able to achieve.

We are still working on the La Trobe statue project. It would be great to have the statue, which be situated in the forecourt of the State Library of Victoria, ready during the year of La Trobe. We will soon be having discussions with the State Government about the project. It is sad that Victoria does not have a monument to La Trobe who really created the administration of the state and did so much to lay out Melbourne and many of the State's regional centres.

We are working to publish a book on La Trobe's Jolimont garden by member Helen Botham. We plan to launch it in 2006 and are in discussion with the Garden History Society, our prospective partner, about the project.

Have a wonderful Christmas and holiday period and be refreshed for what I believe will be a great year in Victoria.

Rodney Davidson
November 2005

Review of Recent Social Events

Charles Robb's Sculpture of Charles Joseph La Trobe

On 20 August 2005 the Gold Treasury Museum was relaunched as 'City Museum' with a broader focus of telling the wider story of Melbourne, from colonial settlement to the present day.

As part of this wider aim, a rather surprising and controversial statue was erected adjacent to the City Museum on the Gordon Reserve. It forms part of the exhibition 'Gardens of Earthly Delight: The Development of Melbourne's Public Parks and Gardens', which is on show at City Museum from November 2005 until February 2006. The story of La Trobe and his legacy to Melbourne and Victoria form an integral part of the exhibition.

As curator Simon Gregg has written:

The statue itself is a critique and a twenty-first century re-interpretation of the nineteenth century values which left La Trobe's work as Lieutenant-Governor largely under-acknowledged. It is a work constructed out of fibreglass and plastics by contemporary sculptor Charles Robb, who showed the work as part of the Helen Lempriere Sculpture Award at Werribee Park earlier this year, where it received great acclaim from the public.

The piece is entirely in the style of other nineteenth century bronze statues, particularly those already found in Gordon Reserve and in the Treasury Gardens, except that it is entirely inverted. Charles Robb himself feels strongly about La Trobe's cause, and made the statue in part to address the lack of any existing statue of La Trobe, but has inverted it so that it becomes something that draws attention, both to the plight of La Trobe himself, and to the beautiful nineteenth-

century environment in which it will be installed.

Were the statue not inverted, it would not be seen as a contemporary interpretation of an historical subject. As such, it is intended to arouse debate about the legacy of La Trobe, and the purpose of nineteenth-century monuments, and their meaning in today's society. The statue is accompanied by a small sign which places the statue in context, discusses La Trobe's contribution to Victoria, and Charles Robb's intention with the work, particularly his inversion of the statue.

The sculptor, Charles Robb, was present at the unveiling of the statue on 10 October and he spoke about his creation of the statue and his intention of focussing attention on La Trobe as a neglected figure in Victoria's history. The work, titled *Landmark*, was highly commended at the Helen Lempriere Sculpture Award 2005. The commemorative statue is a familiar feature of parks and public spaces, celebrating individual great achievements. *Landmark* seeks to invert this effect, by reconfiguring the civic statue as a disorienting and precarious phenomenon calling into question the authority of this particular European visual language.

The statue will be on display at Gordon Reserve until February 2006.



Figure 1 *Landmark* by Charles Robb

Evening Reception at Rodney Davidson's Apartment, Tuesday 15 November 2005

Twenty members of the Society joined with members of the State Library Foundation and the Friends of the Baillieu Library at a reception held at the Melbourne apartment of Mr Rodney Davidson on 15 November 2005. The occasion was a wonderful opportunity to view the books and manuscripts to be offered at the second sale of his private library in February 2006. Well known for its strengths in marine discovery and inland exploration, the collection has other works of great interest. The items to be sold represent that part of the library covering the history of Australia from the administration of Governor Lachlan Macquarie to the year 1850 when the discovery of gold dramatically changed the face of Australia.

Among the works viewed by guests were Augustus Earle's rare collection of hand-coloured lithographs, *Views in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land Australian Scrap Book* (1830), and Charles Atkinson's 1833, *Views Through Hobart-Town*. The two parts of this second work were known only by report until this copy was acquired by Mr Davidson in 1988. A full catalogue of items to be offered in the February sale will soon be available.

Thanks to the generosity of Mr Davidson, proceeds of the evening will be distributed to promote the aims of the three groups present.

Pioneer Service, St James' Old Cathedral, West Melbourne 6 November 2005

A small number of members of the La Trobe Society attended the annual Pioneer Service on Sunday 6 November 2005.

The Venerable Peter Swane, Archdeacon of Melbourne and Vicar of St James' Old

Cathedral welcomed the congregation of invited guests to celebrate the annual Pioneer Service. The purpose for the annual service is, while acknowledging the indigenous people who cared for the land before European arrival, to give thanks for the early white pioneers and settlers and to mark the foundation of the first St James' church 163 years ago.

During his sermon, the Reverend Canon Dr Ray Cleary, Chief Executive Officer of Anglicare Victoria, illuminated the connection between the early Mission of St James and St John and the current work of OzChild, one of the arms Anglicare Victoria now caring for homeless Victorian children.

Dr Cleary emphasised the importance of remembering the early pioneers and their role in establishing the first churches in Melbourne.

Following the service, attendees enjoyed morning tea in the conference centre.

Fay Woodhouse

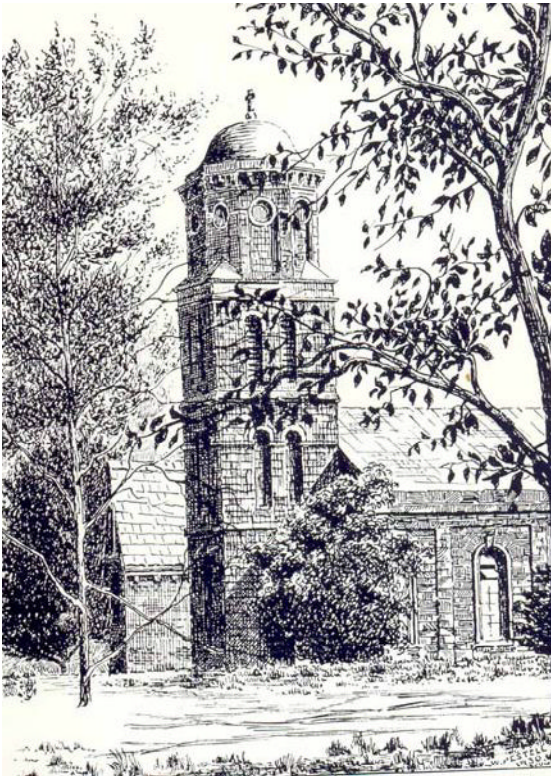


Figure 2 St James Old Cathedral, King Street

Source: La Trobe Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria

Forthcoming Event: Christmas Cocktail Party Lyceum Club 9 December 2005

Featuring a talk by Dr Marguerite Hancock on

THE LIFE OF SOPHIE LA TROBE



Figure 3 Dr Marguerite Hancock

When Sophie de Montmollin accepted Charles Joseph La Trobe's proposal of marriage in 1835, she would not have dreamed that the greater part of her married life would be spent in Australia. Yet after her husband was appointed the first Superintendent of the Port Phillip District of New South Wales, she left the orderly, civilised society of Neuchâtel, her birthplace on the French border of Switzerland where her family had been leading citizens for the past two hundred years, for the new and primitive township of Melbourne, where not even a house had been provided for her.

She was to remain in Melbourne for nearly fourteen years, bringing up a family of four children, and supporting her husband in the difficult and demanding role he had undertaken.



Figure 4 Sophie La Trobe

Source: La Trobe Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria.

family background and the setting of her early life.

Marguerite will give La Trobe Society members a sense of the great contrast between Sophie La Trobe's two homes on opposite sides of the world and provide an account of the life and character of the woman La Trobe called his 'beloved S.'

If you have not already booked for our Christmas Cocktail function on Friday 9 December 2005 at the Lyceum Club, phone: 9646 2112 to make your booking.



Book Reviews

Forgotten Hero: Richard Bourke Irish-born Governor of New South Wales 1831-1837

by Max Waugh, Australian Scholarly Publishing, Melbourne, 2005. \$39.95.



Figure 5 The house where Sophie La Trobe grew up, built on Neuchâtel's Market Square for her ancestor Georges de Montmollin in 1866.

Source: Reproduced from *Colonial Consorts*

She did not become a public figure herself, but her ladylike manner, devotion to her family and the atmosphere of refinement she created in her home, were virtues that all succeeding governors' wives would be expected to uphold.

Marguerite Hancock travelled to Neuchâtel when she was researching her book, *Colonial Consorts*, in order to read Sophie La Trobe's letters in the State Archives, and to gain some knowledge of her



Figure 6 Governor Sir Richard Bourke

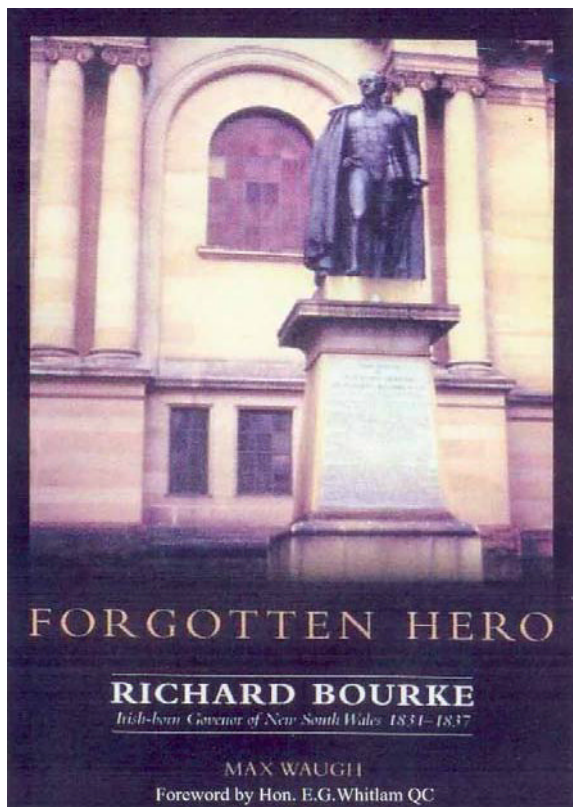


Figure 7 Forgotten Hero

I was struck by the title of Max Waugh's biography of Richard Bourke, Governor of New South Wales from 1831-37. Waugh's proposition is that Bourke's legacy in New South Wales, is, today, largely unknown. The same could, of course, be said of La Trobe in Victoria. However, why was Governor Bourke forgotten? I had to find out.

In his recently published book, Waugh carefully considers this question: why is Bourke a forgotten hero? He explores the many aspects of Bourke's being by first providing the context of his life, his upbringing, childhood, education, philosophy and military service. Bourke's life as an Irish landlord, then as a British civil servant, is described and analysed with sympathy and understanding. As Gough Whitlam in the Foreword states, he places Bourke 'firmly in the spirit of his age' that is, the era of reform inaugurated in Britain by Catholic Emancipation in 1829 and the Great Reform Bill of 1831-2.

In this biography, while Waugh presents the complexity of Bourke's life and career within the context of the prevailing British and colonial policies of the time, the author's bias does not intrude into the narrative. Rather, he allows the reader to assess the evidence and come to his or her own conclusion as to the character and significance of the man.

The Richard Bourke that emerges from the pages of this biography is a sensitive, thoughtful child, young man and officer. For example, on a personal level, his marriage to Elizabeth is happy and successful: he valued and esteemed his wife and children. Indeed, Bourke carefully considered his postings in light of the health and well-being of his wife and one of his sons. That he chose to remain in Ireland rather than take up an overseas appointment is illustrative of this aspect of the man. As a landlord, he demonstrated deep Christian concern for his tenants, as well tolerance for Roman Catholics in a sectarian Irish setting.

Bourke's liberal and humanistic values, exhibited on his own estate, defined him as a reformer. His religious and educational reforms instigated in New South Wales, proved his concern for the development of an educated and God-fearing society.

In terms of Victoria's history, in the final days of his governorship, Bourke visited many parts of the colony. In 1837 he named Melbourne after Lord Melbourne, and appointed Robert Hoddle as Surveyor; he had input into the layout of (what is now) the central business district. Bourke Street was named after him.

Max Waugh's biography is a thoughtful and insightful investigation of a man who was so significant in the period immediately prior to the arrival of Charles La Trobe. He set the scene for many of the cultural directions that La Trobe chose to develop in the Port Phillip District.

This book is highly recommended to all those interested in the colonial period in New South Wales and Victoria.

Fay Woodhouse

The Encyclopedia of Melbourne

edited by Andrew Brown-May and Shurlee Swain
Cambridge University Press, Port Melbourne, 2005,
\$150

As the publicity for this exceptional volume states, 'great cities deserve great encyclopedias' and, based on the format of the *Encyclopedia of New York*, the recently published *Encyclopedia of Melbourne*, attests to this statement.

Launched on 24 October during the Spring Racing Carnival and at one of the greatest monuments to Marvellous Melbourne, the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens, this large format, attractive volume contains the most remarkable entries covering many unknown and intriguing facts and stories about Melbourne. The breadth and depth of entries is breathtaking. For example, all the entries relating to the

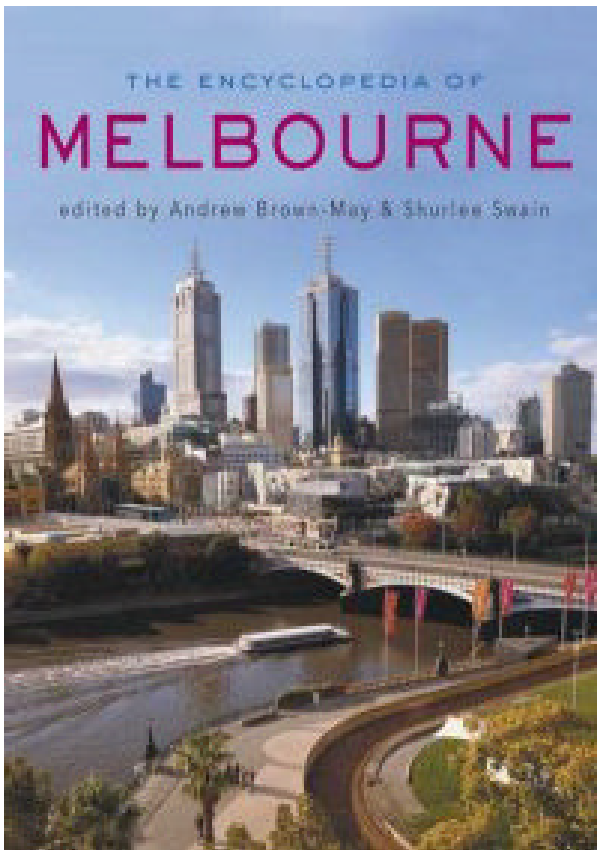


Figure 8 Front cover, *Encyclopedia of Melbourne*

Melbourne Cup are cross-referenced, and dipping into this book on Cup Day was especially topical.

When I opened the volume, I wondered how well Governor La Trobe's legacy to Victoria would be represented. While the volume omits biographical entries, I was delighted to see 24 entries relating to La Trobe's Melbourne. The entries detail his arrival, appointment as Superintendent and Governor, his role in government, education, the Port Phillip District, gold and separation. His contribution to science and cultural institutions such as the Melbourne Museum and Library, as well as his patronage of horticulture, are also documented within the context of other subjects. Entries detail the establishment of La Trobe University, named in his honour, and the ever contentious placement of his home, the pre-fabricated, La Trobe Cottage, constructed on his 12 ½ acres at Jolimont.

This volume holds more than a snapshot of La Trobe's Melbourne - it is an extensive representation of his work, and all entries are cross-referenced, ensuring that the reader's investigations can expand if desired.

The Encyclopedia of Melbourne promises hours of fruitful and enjoyable reading and will no doubt reveal much that we do not know about our own city.

This volume is destined to become the standard volume of reference for Melbourne, the great city whose establishment and character owe so much to La Trobe.

Fay Woodhouse

BUILDING A LA TROBE BIBLIOGRAPHY Our first addition:

Following our article in *La Trobeana*, September 2005, which began our La Trobe Bibliography, Donald Grant has sent details of his publication:

Grant, Donald W M, *Genealogy of the La Trobe Family*, published in *The Genealogist* (Official journal of the Australian Institute of Genealogical Studies Inc.), Volume 1, No. 8, December 1975, pp. 186-207, illus., tables.

This genealogy is at present under complete revision, correction, expansion and updating (October 2005).

2005 Christmas Cards

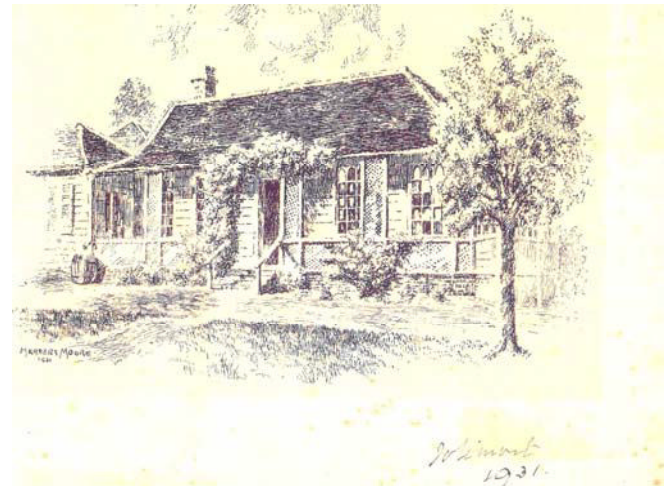


Figure 9 Herbert Moore, Jolimont 1931
Source: Private Collection

This beautiful sketch of La Trobe's Cottage, Jolimont, drawn in 1931, is featured as our Christmas Card for 2005. Cards may be obtained for \$1.50 each from:

Hon. Treasurer
La Trobe Society
PO Box 65
Port Melbourne 3207
Phone: 9646 2112

AND IN THE WORDS OF PHILIP ADAMS ...

.....IN OUR NEXT ...

The February edition of *La Trobeana* will begin the first of our *themed* issues of our Newsletter. The first theme to be explored will be that of exploration and La Trobe's role in the development of the Port Phillip District. The second theme, for our June issue, will investigate education in Colonial Melbourne, and the final theme will explore housing and transport in Port Phillip.

The two major articles to be published in the February edition of *La Trobeana* will be Dianne Reilly's article on La Trobe's exploration of Cape Otway, and Fay Woodhouse's first article on La Trobe's diary of his first foray into South Gippsland during 1845. At this time South Gippsland lay within the Western Port district.

La Trobe left Sophie and the girls at Queenscliff on 28 February 1845, returning to Melbourne on 14 March. In his letter to Governor Gipps dated 16 March 1845, La Trobe reported on the mileage he had covered in his two-week journey of exploration. His itinerary began by riding alone from Melbourne to Dandenong Bridge, where he met up and travelled with Native Police Captain Henry Dana and Commissioner for the Western Port District, Frederick Powlett. Together they travelled south to Western Port Bay and the Inlets, then cross-country to Tarwin and Port Albert. The return journey covered almost 175 miles, in which La Trobe named two rivers.

Fay's article will be the first instalment of her ongoing research into La Trobe's three exploratory trips into Gippsland.



Figure 10 Port Phillip District by the 1840s

Source: AGL Shaw (ed.), *Gipps-La Trobe Correspondence 1839-1846*, MUP, 1989

La Trobeana, the Newsletter of the La Trobe Society of Australia, is published with the kind assistance of:

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Australia

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2006 THE YEAR OF LA TROBE (CONTINUED)

Planned events to celebrate the Year of La Trobe include:

20 March:

Launch of 'The Year of La Trobe' in celebration of La Trobe's 204th Birthday.

July:

Launch of the travelling exhibition of La Trobe's watercolours at La Trobe University Gallery.

November:

La Trobe Heritage Walks around Melbourne.

In addition, the La Trobe Society's joint publication with the Garden History Society, a book titled, *My Australian Garden*, by member Helen Botham, will be launched, as will the published edition of Dianne Reilly's thesis, 'La Trobe, the Making of a Governor' (Melbourne University Press).