

# LA TROBEANA



Journal of the C. J. La Trobe Society Inc.

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*La Trobeana*  
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***La Trobeana***

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Vol. 7, No. 2, August 2008**

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For contributions contact:

**The Honorary Editor  
Dr Fay Woodhouse  
flw@hindsightconsulting.com.au  
Phone: 0427 042753**

For subscription enquiries contact:

**The Honorary Secretary  
The La Trobe Society  
PO Box 65  
Port Melbourne, Vic 3207  
Phone: 9646 2112**

FRONT COVER

**Thomas Woolner, 1825 – 1892, sculptor  
Charles Joseph La Trobe  
1853, diam. 24.0cm. Bronze portrait medallion showing the left profile of Charles  
Joseph La Trobe. Signature and date incised in bronze I.I.: T. Woolner. Sc. 1853:/M  
La Trobe, Charles Joseph, 1801 – 1875. Accessioned 1894  
La Trobe Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria.**

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## A Word from the President

Once again the year has been full of excellent social events for members of the C J La Trobe Society. I was delighted to have been present at this year's Birthday celebrations and enjoyed the lively questions and discussion about La Trobe's Cottage.

It was pleasing indeed for the C J La Trobe Society to sponsor, once again, the La Trobe Society Fellow for 2008-09. This year's recipient is Dr Wayne Caldwell. During his Fellowship he will investigate two opposing sets of perceptions about Gippsland. His working title is, *Perceptions of Place: the European experience of Gippsland, 1839 to 1844* and we will look forward to hearing of his progress in due course. Our 2007-2008 Fellow, Dr Frances Thiele, will be reporting soon on her work.

We have been particularly fortunate this year in the presentation of the La Trobe Society/Royal Historical Society A G L Shaw Lecturer. Dr Val Noone drew a large audience to hear his presentation on the relationship between Charles Gavan Duffy and Charles La Trobe and their policies involving selectors, squatters and Aborigines.

We were very pleased to see that our inaugural Dinner and Annual General Meeting also attracted a large number of members. The Lyceum provided an excellent venue for this event which was extremely popular. Our guest speaker for the evening, Mr Geoffrey Edwards, Director, Geelong Gallery, spoke fluently and engaged his audience on the world of art.

In this edition of *La Trobeana* you will find articles discussing early Melbourne and the work of Bishop Perry and Mrs Frances Perry. Neither of these articles have been published before and we are delighted to be able to present them to our members.

As members are aware, one of our foundation members, Peter Corlett, created the magnificent statue of Charles La Trobe that now stands proudly on the forecourt of the State Library of Victoria. In July 2008 the statue of a typical Bullecourt digger by Peter Corlett was unveiled at Be'er Sheva, Israel. Four other La Trobe Society members were present at Be'er Sheva for this event. Peter has written an article for us about his trip to Israel for this event, and members will be interested, I know, in the process he describes in creating this statue.

The annual Christmas Cocktail event will this year be held in one of Melbourne's most 'bohemian' Clubs, and I hope many of you will attend and show your support for the Society.

With best wishes  
Rodney Davidson



## Recent Events

### La Trobe's Birthday

On Tuesday 18 March, more than 50 members gathered at La Trobe's Cottage to celebrate La Trobe's 207th birthday and to hear our President, Rodney Davidson, speak on the topic 'Some stories of the restoration of La Trobe's Cottage'. We were delighted to see Professor A G L Shaw at this event. The enthusiastic audience enjoyed a leisurely late afternoon picnic, sharing food and enjoying the champagne and birthday cake.



Birthday Cake cut by Rodney Davidson, AO, OBE

Rodney's talk generated a great deal of discussion from the audience as the subject of the location of the Cottage and its upkeep and access remains one that is a concern to many members of the Society. A hearty vote of thanks was made to Rodney Davidson for his continued contribution to and involvement with the Society.

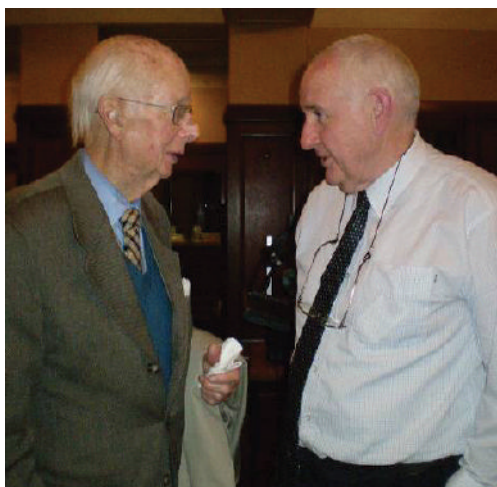
### La Trobe Society/Royal Historical Society A G L Shaw Lecture

'From Charles La Trobe to Charles Gavan Duffy: selectors, squatters and Aborigines'

The Annual C J La Trobe Society/Royal Historical Society A G L Shaw Lecture was held at the RHSV's premises in A'Becket Street,

Melbourne on Tuesday 3 June. While gourmet refreshments were served, members from both Societies mingled and caught up with friends. Everyone enjoyed the lively and welcoming atmosphere.

Our guest speaker, Dr Val Noone, captivated our audience of more than 60 members and guests with his informative, thought provoking and erudite presentation. Drawing on primary and secondary sources, Val's lecture began by giving us a brief biography of Charles Gavan Duffy before investigating his land policies and the legacy of Charles La Trobe.



Professor A G L Shaw, AO speaking to Dr Val Noone at the La Trobe Society/Royal Historical Society A G L Shaw Lecture, 3 June 2008

The lecture focused on policy changes and conflicts regarding squatters, selectors and the Indigenous people during the years 1858-9 and 1861-3 when Duffy was minister for lands. Questions from the audience generated further discussion and a high level of interest was evident in the subject so ably presented by Dr Noone.

## Dinner and AGM– 8 July 2008, Lyceum Club

It is pleasing to report that 60 members and guests attended the Annual General Meeting at the Lyceum Club on 8 July. In the absence interstate of the President, Rodney Davidson, Vice-President Susan Priestley ably took the chair. The business of the meeting took the form of reports from the Secretary and the Treasurer on the activities and the finances of the Society.

Following the formal business, members had the pleasure of hearing Mr Geoffrey Edwards, Director, Geelong Gallery who, quoting Thomas Woolner, discussed aspects of Victorian colonial



Dining and chatting at the Inaugural Annual Dinner and AGM, 8 July 2008

painting and sculpture under the title '...soon your chief works will be priceless' in an illustrated presentation.

Since 1999, Geoffrey has been Director of one of Australia's oldest and largest regional galleries where he has overseen the comprehensive restoration and upgrade of the Gallery's beautiful historic building.

At the conclusion, dinner was served in the Club dining room.

## Forthcoming Events



### Christmas Cocktails

In keeping with our recent tradition of La Trobe Society members hosting our Christmas Cocktail event in one of Melbourne's Clubs, we are happy to announce that our annual Christmas Cocktail event will this year be held at the Savage Club, Bank Place, Melbourne, on Friday 5 December. Our host will be Mr Shane Carmody.

The Melbourne Savage Club was founded in the late nineteenth century. The Club name is attributed to the minor eighteenth century poet, Richard Savage, as well as being a wry *double-entendre* on the spirited nature of its founding members. The early Savages contributed to the economic and cultural development of the then infant nation of Australia. Well known figures in the arts, such as Sir Arthur Streeton, Sir John Longstaff, Frederick McCubbin and David Low, were early members of the Club. Alberto Zelman, who contributed much to the world of music, and other members of the Club played important roles in medical, legal, commercial and political fields.

In 1923, the Club purchased the present building at 12 Bank Place which is classified by the

National Trust of Australia (Victoria). The Club House was built in 1884-85 and was the one-time property of Sir Rupert Clarke Bart. During the years of consolidation, one of Australia's most respected Statesmen, he played an important role in the Club's administration. Sir Robert Menzies, KT, CH, QC, Prime Minister of Australia 1939-41 and 1949-66, served as President 1947-1962.

Booking details will be mailed to members later in the year.

## Report on 2007-08 La Trobe Fellowship

Dr Frances Thiele, the winner of the La Trobe Society Fellowship in 2007, has made excellent progress with her project, despite the set back caused by the severe attack of Chicken Pox she contracted towards the end of her period of research.

She has managed to catch up, to a large extent, to her carefully planned schedule of research and writing, and has now completed six chapters of her monograph on the management by La Trobe of the Aboriginal Protectorate. She is now making good progress on chapters seven and eight, and once the introduction and conclusion are completed, the manuscript will be ready for discussions about publication.

## La Trobe Society Fellowship 2008-09



Dr Wayne Caldwell shakes hands with Treasurer, John Drury

In 2007, the inaugural La Trobe Society Fellowship, under the umbrella of the State Library of Victoria, and sponsored by the Rodney Davidson Family, was awarded to Dr Frances Thiele. As her project draws to a close, we

look forward to the publication of the results of her Fellowship.

The La Trobe Society Fellowships are intended for the use of the resources of the State Library to research and write about the colonial period of Victoria's history during Charles Joseph La Trobe's administration from 1839 to 1854.

This year, the award is generously sponsored by the Shoppee Family.

It is with the greatest pleasure that we announce the appointment of the La Trobe Society Fellow for 2008-09.

The successful applicant is Dr Wayne Caldwell, whose subject, *Perceptions of Place: the European experience of Gippsland, 1839 to 1844*, will examine two opposing sets of perceptions about Gippsland, firstly as seen by explorers and squatters, and secondly, by the colonial government which attempted to impose law and order in the province.

Dr Caldwell, a geographer from Monash University, will take up his Fellowship at the State Library in August. Members will have the opportunity of meeting him and hearing a progress report from him at the Christmas Cocktails event at the Melbourne Savage Club on 5 December 2008.



## A Word from the Treasurer

At the AGM held at the Lyceum Club on 8 July, I took the opportunity of bringing members up to date about the plan formulated at the 2007 AGM of establishing a committee to investigate the formation of a Trust or Foundation with the aim of offering assistance to Indigenous Australians in the area of education.

Expert advice indicates that a great deal of assistance is already being provided in this area. Due to this I am now proposing the formation of a Future Directions Committee to review the operations of the C. J. La Trobe Society, including the Society's Fellowship program and the aims and objectives of any Trust or Foundation we as a Society might agree to establish.

Nomination forms will be sent out to all members for positions on the Future Directions Committee, as well as for the existing committee of management

which needs to be expanded. I urge your support as both committees are vital for the future of the Society.

A great deal has been achieved in the seven years since the Society was incorporated, including the commissioning of the sculpture by Peter Corlett on the forecourt of the State Library of Victoria, a credit to our members for their generosity and support. We now need to plan for a strong future.

The 2007 La Trobe Society Fellowship under the umbrella of the State Library, sponsored by the Rodney Davidson Family, is drawing to a close, and the 2008 Fellowship, sponsored by the Shoppee Family, is about to start. Professor AGL Shaw has generously advised that he will sponsor the 2009 Fellowship. We will now be looking for sponsorship for 2010 and beyond.

The booklet illustrating the creation of the La Trobe sculpture is still in progress and I must apologise for the delay. It will be supplied to all donors as soon as possible, and copies will be available for sale to other members.

John Drury  
Honorary Treasurer

## **'Mutual Society, Help and Comfort': Charles Joseph La Trobe and Charles Perry 1848-1854**

We are delighted to publish the following article by Bishop James Grant. 'Mutual Society, Help and Comfort': Charles Joseph La Trobe and Charles Perry 1848-54 which provides us with a view of early Melbourne and the establishment of the Church of England that has, up until now, not been published.

*Bishop James Grant, AM, a graduate of the University of Melbourne, was ordained a priest in 1960 and consecrated a Bishop in St Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne in 1970. He was Chairman of the Brotherhood of St Laurence from 1972 to 1987. He fulfilled the role of Dean of St Paul's Cathedral from 1985 to 1989 and, in 1994, was created a member of the Order of Australia for his exemplary services to the Church. He has published widely, co-authoring The Melbourne Scene with Dr Geoffrey Serle in 1957, and producing Perspective of a Century, the Centenary History of Trinity College in 1972.*

*Both Bishop Grant and his wife, Ms Rowena Armstrong, AO, QC, are foundation members*

*of the La Trobe Society. Their double portrait by eminent artist Peter Churcher was commissioned by Trinity College where it hangs in the College Dining Hall.*

When, on 24 January 1848, Bishop Charles Perry was greeted by Superintendent C J La Trobe on his arrival in Melbourne, they met as strangers. When the ex-Lieutenant Governor was farewelled by the Bishop six years later, they parted as intimate friends. While compatible on many levels, they differed in their origins, their education and their past experience. Yet their association was productive of much good for both Church and State in Victoria's early years.

La Trobe<sup>1</sup> was the son of Christian Ignatius La Trobe, a Moravian clergyman. His forebear, Jean La Trobe had left his home in Montauban in South West France following the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 and taken service with William of Orange. After the defeat of James II, he settled in Ireland where he established himself as a linen manufacturer in Waterford. His grandson, Benjamin La Trobe, was received into membership of the Moravian Church in London in 1745 and ordained a Moravian minister in 1756.

The Moravians, or United Brethren, originated in the fifteenth century in Moravia, part of today's Czech Republic, in response to the preaching of John Hus. Persecuted at home, they migrated in 1722 to Saxony at the invitation of Count Nikolaus von Zinzendorf. From here, a number moved to London where they established the Fetter Lane Society. Their distinctive characteristics were an emphasis on ecumenical fellowship, education and missionary zeal.

Benjamin made Fulneck in West Yorkshire his base for an itinerant ministry and, in 1782, as Superintendent, established the Moravian village of Fairfield near Manchester. His son, Christian Ignatius was educated at the Fulneck School and at the Moravian Theological College at Niesky in Saxony. In 1787, he was appointed Secretary of the Moravian Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel and, in 1797, was elected Secretary of the United Brethren in England.

Charles Joseph was born in London on 20 March 1801 and was a boarder at Fulneck School from 1807. Moravian schools were conducted on enlightened principles with classes of twelve and encouragement of individual talents. Charles emerged proficient in Classical and Modern Languages, History, Drawing and Science in the form of Botany and Physics.



Artist unknown, *Mr La Trobe*. Charles Joseph La Trobe as a young man, crayon, n/d. La Trobe Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria

On leaving Fulneck, Charles taught for three years at Fairfield. With no clear career path before him, he accepted, in 1822, a position as tutor to Albert-Alexandre, the twelve year old son of Comte Frédéric de Pourtalès, of Neuchâtel, Switzerland. During the three years of his engagement, he was able to explore Switzerland, including the high Alps. An account of his travels, *The Alpenstock*,<sup>2</sup> was favourably received by the public and opened up for him a career as a travel writer. Tours of the Tyrol and Italy, the United States and Mexico followed, the latter in company with Albert-Alexandre de Pourtalès, his former pupil.

In 1829, he enrolled at Magdalene College, Cambridge, but did not take up residence. Nonetheless, as Washington Irving, who travelled with him, observed he was a man of many interests and broad culture:

Having rambled over many countries, he had become, to a certain degree, a citizen of the world, easily adapting himself to every change. He was a man of a thousand occupations; a botanist, a geologist, a hunter of beetles and butterflies, a musical amateur, a sketcher of no mean pretensions, in short, a complete virtuoso; added to which he was a very indefatigable, if not always a very successful, sportsman. Never had a man more irons in the fire; and, consequently, never was a man more busy or more cheerful.<sup>3</sup>

In September 1835, La Trobe courted and married Sophie de Montmollin, from Neuchâtel. With marriage, came the need for an income greater than that accruing from his writing.

Members of the Moravian Church were early involved in the campaign, led by William Wilberforce and Thomas Clarkson, to end the Slave Trade and free the slaves. Through their position as Secretary of the Moravian Mission Society, Charles' father and brother were known to the Colonial Secretary, Lord Glenelg, and the Under-Secretary, James Stephen, both members of the Evangelical 'Clapham Sect' led by Wilberforce.

It was no surprise then that La Trobe was commissioned in February 1837 to visit the West Indian colonies and report upon the application of the funds voted by Parliament to provide educational facilities for the emancipated slaves. During a stay of seventeen months, La Trobe produced reports on Negro Education in Jamaica, the Windward and Leeward Islands and British Guiana and Trinidad. In them he stressed the need for and value of a sound moral and religious education. Glenelg was impressed and, as a direct consequence, appointed La Trobe in February 1839 as Superintendent of the newly constituted Port Phillip District of New South Wales.

Given his antecedents and his record as a serious, cultured, and religious individual, it was not surprising that La Trobe, in his reply to the Address of Welcome from the inhabitants of Melbourne at his landing on 3 October 1839, should outline a vision for the District that went beyond immediate material concerns.

It will not be by individual aggrandisement, by the possession of numerous flocks and herds, or of costly acres, that we shall secure for the country enduring prosperity and happiness; but by the acquisition and maintenance of sound religious and moral institutions without which no country can become truly great.<sup>4</sup>

Before leaving England, La Trobe had collected £500 in contributions towards Melbourne's first permanent church and brought with him 100 Bibles and 300 New Testaments granted by the British and Foreign Bible Society.<sup>5</sup> He now gave further proof that his support for religion went beyond mere words. On 9 November, he laid the Foundation Stone of St James' Church, designed by Robert Russell, and succeeded William Lonsdale, the Police Magistrate and Commandant, as president of the church's building committee. But he drew the line at extending his patronage to an Amateur Concert



proposed for December 1840 in aid of the St James' Building Fund. While the objections of several other members of the church would have been, for the most part, removed if nothing but sacred music was performed, La Trobe was averse to the raising of money for church purposes by any form of entertainment. His preference for direct support was demonstrated by his generous donations towards the cost of St James' and the churches proposed for Geelong and Portland.

Although La Trobe, a 'cradle Moravian,' was a constant attender, first at St James' and then at St Peter's and identified easily with Evangelical Anglicans, he was very ready to support religion generally. So, in July 1840, we find him presiding at the inaugural meeting of the Auxiliary Bible Society of Australia Felix, led by William Lonsdale.

Three years later, he welcomed the Bishop of Australia, W G Broughton, on his second Visitation of Port Phillip from September until December 1843. Broughton testified:

Shortly after landing, I received a visit from the excellent Superintendent of the District, C J La Trobe Esq. who from that time, during the whole of my two month's residence, continued to render me the most valuable services, accompanied by the kindest hospitality and attention.<sup>6</sup>

La Trobe's hopes for a second church to serve the "east-enders", i.e. the residents on the Eastern Hill with Newtown and Richmond, were frustrated by the Depression of 1842-44. It was 1846 before he had the satisfaction, on 18 June, of laying the Foundation Stone of St Peter's.

Keenly aware of the 'spiritual' destitution of Port Phillip and other outlying regions of his diocese and the need for more Episcopal oversight, Broughton, in making the case for subdivision to the Colonial Office, offered to surrender £1000 of his £2000 Episcopal stipend. By 1846, there was approval for additional bishops at Port Phillip and the Hunter Valley. W E Gladstone, the Colonial Secretary, who was also the Treasurer of the Colonial Bishops Fund, declined to approve Broughton's level of sacrifice but he did accept £250 for each new diocese (a third diocese for South and West Australia was endowed by Miss Burdett-Coutts). As settled by Gladstone, the Bishop of Melbourne was to have £500 from the Colonial Government and £333-6-8 from the Colonial Bishops Fund. £2000 would also be provided towards the cost of an approved Episcopal residence.

Disappointingly, clergy in England displayed little interest and it was March 1847 before the new Colonial Secretary, Earl Grey, was able to nominate Charles Perry to the Queen for appointment. On 25 June, by Letters Patent, the Port Phillip District was erected into a bishopric of the Church of England with St James' church as its Cathedral. Four days later, on St Peter's Day, in Westminster Abbey, in company with bishops for Adelaide, Cape Town and Newcastle, Perry was consecrated as the first Bishop of Melbourne.

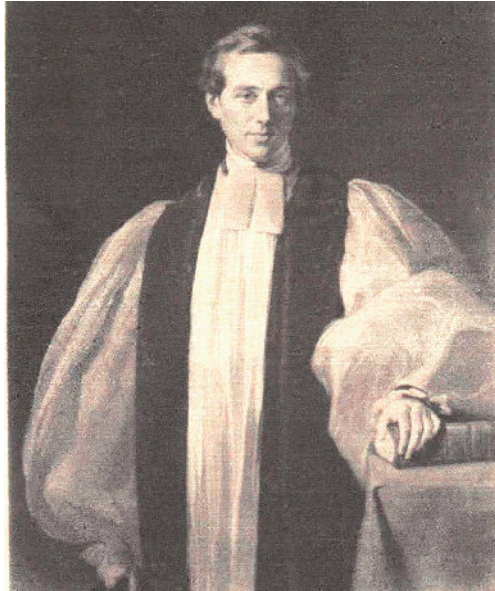
Coincidentally, on 25 June in Rome, the Pope established the Roman Catholic Diocese of Melbourne and named James Alipius Goold as first Bishop. However, Goold was not consecrated until 6 August 1848 and did not arrive in Melbourne until October.

Charles Perry,<sup>7</sup> born at Hackney on 17 February 1807, was the youngest son of John Perry, a Blackwall shipbuilder, owner of the Brunswick Dock and Sheriff of Essex. He had been educated at private schools, Harrow and Trinity College Cambridge. He graduated in 1828 with a 'double first' in mathematics (Senior Wrangler and Smith's Prizeman) and classics (seventh in the Tripos).

He thought first of a career in the law, entering at the Inner Temple, taking chambers at Lincoln's Inn Fields, and reading with E V Sidebottom, an eminent conveyancer and Mr Colman an eminent pleader. Concurrently, he sat for and obtained a Fellowship at Trinity College in 1829. However, his health broke down and he gave up his legal studies early in 1831. He continued an invalid until 1832 when William Whewell, later Master of Trinity, invited him to return as a College Tutor.

Although not overtly religious, Perry began to move in Evangelical circles. He was introduced by his pupil, Edward Hoare, to the Gurney family whose members included Elizabeth Fry and Sir Thomas and Lady Hannah Fowell Buxton. Among his mentors were James Scholefield, Professor of Greek and William Carus, Charles Simeon's successor at Holy Trinity, Cambridge.

He was made deacon by Bishop Monk of Gloucester in 1833 and priest by Bishop Allen of Ely in 1836, both on the title of his College Fellowship. By this time, he had become known as a convinced Evangelical. This found expression in 1835 when he, with others, purchased the patronage of St Andrew the Less, Barnwell, near Cambridge. This parish had been transformed from a small village into a suburb with a population of 8,000 served



The Right Reverend Charles Perry, First Bishop of Melbourne, 1847-1876  
*A Short History of the Church of England in Victoria 1847-1947*, Melbourne, 1947

only by a church holding 100. A new, vigorous incumbent was appointed and two additional churches built, for one of which, St Paul's, Perry assumed responsibility. His marriage to Fanny Cooper in 1841 necessitated the resignation of his Fellowship. He applied himself to parish work and in 1845 became Vicar of the now separate parish.

Meanwhile, he had evinced an interest in clerical education, publishing in 1841, *Clerical Education with special reference to the Universities* which highlighted the need for more systematic pre-ordination training. This pamphlet received favourable comment from, among others, Bishop Blomfield of London.

Given, then, this interest, his concern for Church Extension, his support for the Church Missionary Society together with the possession of private means, his nomination for Melbourne was hardly surprising. Such a bishop, it could be expected, would commend himself to the many lay leaders of Protestant Irish background. When the news reached Melbourne, the appointment of a man of such academic distinction was generally welcomed. It was noted, especially, that in Cambridge he had displayed 'disinterested zeal and excellent judgement'.

In common parlance, a 'city' denotes an urban centre wherein a diocesan bishop has his seat or cathedra. In conformity with this usage, Perry's Royal Letters Patent included this provision:

and [we] do ordain that the said Town of Melbourne shall henceforth be a City and be called the City of Melbourne.<sup>8</sup>

Melbourne's status as a City could then be said to commence on 25 June 1847, the date of Perry's Letters Patent, or it could be said to date from 5 February 1848 when they were published in the New South Wales Government Gazette.

However, under colonial law, Melbourne continued a 'Town' until 3 August 1849 when the New South Wales Legislative Council passed Act 13 Victoria No. 14, *An Act to effect the change in the Style and Title of the Corporation of Melbourne rendered necessary by the erection of the Town of Melbourne to a City*.<sup>9</sup>

Once consecrated, Perry did not leave forthwith for Melbourne. He had been briefed on the needs of his diocese and recognised that his priorities had to be more clergy and funds to support them. His first recruit was a forty-eight year old Irishman, Hussey Burgh Macartney, whose relatives, C J Griffith, W P Greene, J F L V Foster, and W F Stawell were already in Victoria. Two other clergy and two ordinands completed the party. To support them and others to follow, a strong committee comprising Cambridge academics and Evangelical laity accepted Perry's challenge to raise £8000 in cash and promises. This would meet the cost of passage money, outfits, underwriting of stipends of new clergy for five years and allow subsidies to approved building projects. Support came from a wide spectrum: Perry's family and friends; Cambridge colleagues, relatives of Port Phillip settlers and from Evangelical clergy and parishes. These activities occupied Perry for three months.

On 10 October, the Episcopal party set sail from Plymouth on the Blackwall clipper *Stag* and arrived in Port Phillip on Sunday 23 January 1848. When it was known that the Bishop's vessel had anchored in Hobson's Bay, more than a hundred well wishers proceeded next morning in the steamer, *Diamond*, to meet him. These included the Superintendent, the Mayor (Andrew Russell) 'Parson Thomson', W F Stawell and Dr James Palmer. On landing, the Bishop and Mrs Perry were welcomed by a crowd of three hundred with loud acclamations. They were then driven in the Mayor's carriage to St James Parsonage and then to La Trobe's residence.

Four days later, Perry was installed in St James' Cathedral. In the afternoon, Thomson presented an Address of Welcome from the members of the United Church of England and Ireland resident in and around Melbourne. This expressed "the cordial satisfaction with which we hail the arrival of one of its Bishops to these distant shores of the British Empire". In reply, Perry spelt out his *modus operandi*:

I [am] determined to know no party and to interfere in no political matter

I wish to recognise no distinction of persons except that which the word of God allows.

I shall shun no man's society except he be known to be profane or immoral or teach doctrine which I believe to be subversive of the Gospel of Christ.<sup>10</sup>

What this meant was soon evident. The Roman Catholic pastor, Father P B Geoghegan, paid a courtesy call on the Bishop at St James' Parsonage and finding him not at home, left his visiting card. To his amazement, this was returned with a curt note intimating that, in his view he felt precluded from receiving his call:

...by the consideration of our relative positions towards each other as ministers of the Churches of Rome and England. You must consider me as a minister of the latter Church to be under the anathema of the Council of Trent while I cannot but regard every clergyman of the Church of Rome as guilty of perverting the Gospel of Christ and therefore one to whom are applicable the words of the Apostle Paul (Gal. 1. 8-9), "Let him be accursed".

If we are sincere in the profession of our respective creeds, we must mutually regard each other as teaching error in the name of Christianity... [This] would render any private social intercourse between us an occasion of pain rather than of pleasure...

I have no knowledge of you personally, but I have heard you generally commended for your urbanity and discretion, and my desire and prayer for you is that if, as I believe, you have erred from the Faith, the Lord would give you wisdom to discern and courage to embrace the truth.

Geoghegan commented:

The dignified prelate, who was Dr Perry's predecessor received with much kindness a similar visit from me, and acknowledged it in person at my residence: and so far from the least imputation of unbecoming compromise or inconsistency having been uttered against these goodly interchanges, they have been celebrated for years in the province as gratifying proofs that men may err conscientiously and zealously differ in religion without rancour or interruption of the civilities of life.<sup>11</sup>

That this was the Bishop's sincere conviction was patent but both inside and outside his own Church, his behaviour gave offence. The most that can be said for him is that his previous experience in the exclusively Anglican



Batchelor & O'Neill, photographers, *Bishop Charles Perry*, albumen silver photograph, c.1857-1863. La Trobe Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria.

University of Cambridge had not prepared him for the colonial situation. However, by November 1848, he was prepared to associate himself with Bishop Goold on the committee working to establish a Benevolent Asylum for Melbourne.

Meanwhile, the Perrys' immediate need was accommodation. Mrs Perry wrote to her sister-in-law, Amelia:

Jan. 24th Mr [La Trobe] has only been able to procure for us a house into which we could not possibly squeeze, in a low situation on the river bank, swarming with mosquitos, and approachable by a road which is jolting enough now but in winter is up to the axletrees in mud. Of course we have rejected it.<sup>12</sup>

Jan 25th Mr [La Trobe] took us to two or three other places on the Yarra, most beautifully situated... Two or three people have kindly offered us their houses, while they go to the seaside. (Brighton for instance) or go into the Bush, but they are all either too distant from Melbourne, or so small that we could not possibly get into them... At length, Mr [La Trobe] suggested a neat-looking hotel, in a very quiet part near the old church, and the landlord of which we know to be a very respectable person accordingly we went to look at it, and found an extremely new part of the house quite at our service. We immediately closed with them, and decided to take possession.<sup>13</sup>



La Trobe 207th Birthday at La Trobe Cottage



Inaugural Dinner, 8 July 2008, Professor John Barnes, Michael Bond and Patricia Green



Rodney Davidson, AO, OBE, speaking at the La Trobe Birthday celebration



RHSV Lecture – x and x Shoppe and Professor John Barnes



Professor Shaw and Dr Noone, La Trobe/RHSV Lecture



Peter Corlett sculpture, unveiling April 2008



Dinner at Be'er Sheva – l. to r. – Willys Keeble, Peter Corlett, Doris Moran, Chloe Corlett, Dianne Reilly, Phil Moran. Photographer – John Drury.



Peter Corlett sculpture, unveiling April 2008 (detail)

The Perry's stayed for six weeks at the Southern Cross Hotel in Bourke Street West, before deciding to rent 'Upper Jolimont', the second of La Trobe's prefabricated wooden cottages. Bishops court, on the hill behind, was not commenced until 1850 and it was December 1852 before the Perry's moved there. This meant that the Superintendent and the Bishop, living in close proximity, were in regular contact with each other.



Antoine Fauchery, *The Right Reverend Bishop of Melbourne*, albumen silver photograph, 1858.  
La Trobe Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria.

After suburban excursions to Brighton and Heidelberg, the Perry's proceeded overland from Geelong to Port Fairy in April 1848 and to Portland by sea in December. In February 1849, escorted by Captain Dana and his native police, they explored west and south Gippsland. No doubt the Bishop was well briefed by the Superintendent who had himself travelled extensively throughout the District. Perry was usually accompanied by his wife but La Trobe's wife, Sophie, remained at home with their children.

From the first European settlement in 1834, Port Phillipians had felt themselves disadvantaged under Sydney rule and from 1839 began to agitate for separation from New South Wales. Perry's appointment had marked a stage in the District's progress towards the status of an autonomous colony. Once installed, Perry habitually acted without reference to Broughton, his Metropolitan in Sydney. However, this reflected his independent temperament more than his identification with the aspirations of his flock.

Nonetheless, Perry welcomed warmly Separation when it came on 1 July 1851. In his editorial in the August issue of the *Church of England Messenger* he wrote:

We are assured too, and this we account to be no small recommendation of the Lieutenant Governor of Victoria to our confidence and affection, that he will never be "ashamed of the Gospel" of Christ but as heretofore in his office of Superintendent, so henceforth in his more exalted station, he will be ready at all times and in every way that becomes his position, to promote both the spiritual welfare of our European and the conversion, if by God's blessing it may be, of our aboriginal fellow subjects. Lastly, we can confidently infer from all his previous conduct, that, while in his individual character he steadfastly maintains what he believes to be the truth, and regulates his own conduct by his own conscientious convictions, he will in the discharge of his official duties always exercise that perfect impartiality with respect to the various sects and denominations of Christians which the existing laws of our Colony require and by which alone he can faithfully fulfil the trust committed to him.<sup>14</sup>

Along with the demand for Separation went the demand to participate in government. While La Trobe was suspicious and distrustful of 'the mob', Perry favoured lay participation in Church government. A Conference of clergy and lay representatives, whose meeting coincided with the inauguration of the Colony of Victoria, endorsed his proposed Church Assembly and the participation of the laity in the appointment of their clergy.

Glenelg, in appointing La Trobe, did so with the hope that he would write a new chapter in race relations. A Protectorate for Port Phillip aborigines had been established in 1838 with George Augustus Robinson as Chief Protector together with four Assistant Protectors. However, by 1848 it was clear that the Protectorate had proved ineffective in reducing violence and in settling, protecting and educating its charges and it was terminated in 1849. In its place, William Thomas, the most effective of the Protectors, was appointed Guardian of the aborigines in the settled districts.

Though disappointed, La Trobe did not give up. Moravians had the reputation of being ready to work and succeed in the most unpromising situations. La Trobe applied to his brother, Peter, who had succeeded his father as Secretary of the Moravian Mission Board in London, for missionaries. In February 1850, the Reverend Andrew Taeger and Frederick Spieseke arrived

in Melbourne. Their arrival was noticed in the *Church of England Messenger*<sup>15</sup> and they were welcomed warmly by La Trobe and Perry. They stayed, first, with E S Parker at the Upper Loddon Protectorate to learn something of the language and customs of the natives. Then, in October 1850, La Trobe reserved 25,000 acres at Lake Boga, eleven miles south of Swan Hill, and granted the missionaries 323 acres for a mission station. On 30 June 1851, on the eve of Separation, La Trobe presided at a meeting at which the missionaries reported on their work. On the platform, were the Bishop and Anglican and other clergy who pledged their prayers and money.<sup>16</sup> However, the aborigines were distrustful and stayed only briefly. Pastoralists, with an eye to their land and prospectors with an eye to aboriginal women, harassed the missionaries. A third recruit, C W Kraemer, who arrived in 1853 made little difference and the missionaries returned to Germany in 1856.

Nevertheless, their efforts encouraged others to try. On 31 October 1853, at a meeting at the Diocesan Grammar School, the Church of England Mission to the Aborigines was established. Thomas Goodwin, a layman who offered his services was despatched to the Murray Valley to search for a suitable location. He found this near the later settlement of Wentworth and in 1855, with John Bulmer, established Yelta mission station. The Moravians returned in 1859 and established Ebenezer mission station near Dimboola in the Wimmera.

Gold! Gold! Gold! My dear A[melia] we are gone mad with gold: and what is to be the end of it no one knows.

So wrote Frances Perry to her sister-in-law in England on 4 October 1851—

The state of excitement we are in is altogether indescribable. There is a kind of undefinable uncomfortable feeling; as if something extraordinary, one does not know what, was going to happen. Two thousand persons from Melbourne alone, took out digging licences (for which they pay one shilling per day) last week; the town is almost emptied of men, and the streets are full of 'cradles' and drays packed for the journey.<sup>17</sup>

For some weeks, civil society hovered on the brink of collapse with police and government officials joining the 'rushes'. La Trobe was beset on every side, so must have welcomed Perry's measured response in the November issue of the *Church of England Messenger*. After holding up California as exemplifying the dangers created by a gold rush he went on:

We trust that our God has better things in store for us; and we account it to be a peculiar token of His goodness towards us, that the discovery of this goldfield has been delayed, not only until a large number of upright and intelligent, and we trust we may add, religious men have settled here and acquired a status and influence among us; not only until Melbourne has become a large and populous city and Geelong a prosperous commercial town; not only until the disproportion between the sexes, incidental to a new colony, has been in a great measure diminished, and the love of adventure and the eagerness of speculation have given place to the enjoyments of domestic happiness and the quiet comforts of home; but also, which we regard as a remarkable instance of God's prudential care over us, until our separation from New South Wales has given us a local government...<sup>18</sup>

For Perry himself, the gold discoveries created a huge problem in ministering to a swollen population. To make matters worse, three of his clergy returned to England in 1852 and there was difficulty in providing an adequate income to those who remained. Church building was at a standstill; St Paul's, begun in 1850, did not open until December 1852. In the same month, the Perry's left La Trobe's cottage and moved into the new Bishops Court. Mrs Perry writing to her schoolmate, Elizabeth Lambert, wife of the parson at Ballan, on 13 January 1853 described her situation:

We have been removing for the last I don't know how long and scarcely know whether we stand on our head or our feet. You cannot think how earnestly I wish ourselves back in our dear old cottage for this is truly forlorn grandeur – a great unfinished house full of dirty workmen, dust and misery – without doors or windows in the kitchen departments and to crown it all, two sick servants.<sup>19</sup>

Relief came in December 1852 when the Legislative Council increased the provision for State Aid to Religion from £6,000 to £30,000 of which the Church of England received £14,000. The legislators believed that the social crisis through which the colony was passing demanded greater support for the Churches. Archibald Michie expressed the general sentiment:

If state support for religion were denied, he trembled for the result.<sup>20</sup>

In December 1852, La Trobe submitted his resignation but he did not leave Victoria until May 1854. Fortunately, 1853 was a better year with the benefits of the gold discoveries beginning to flow into the community. Public services, fine

buildings and, most importantly, the University and the Public Library were commenced. Redmond Barry, who was to continue La Trobe's work of 'cultural evangelism' and Hugh Childers who followed Perry as La Trobe's tenant at Upper Jolimont were his co-workers in the latter enterprises. Perry, too, began to recover ground, raising £2,000 to bring out 10 clergy and organising the despatch of prefabricated iron churches.

Together, Church and State had weathered the storm. On 19 November 1853, at Hawthorn, the Lieutenant Governor laid the Foundation Stone of Christ Church and Sir James Palmer that of the National School, both in the presence of the Bishop. The occasion symbolised an alliance that had helped secure for Victorians the lasting riches of "True Religion and Sound Learning".

Though separated by distance, La Trobe and Perry continued their association. Writing from London on 3 April 1855, La Trobe expressed his pleasure at meeting the Perrys, the Bishop having come to England to secure the Royal Assent to his Church Constitution Bill.<sup>21</sup> That same year, Mrs Perry was amongst those who wrote supporting his contentious marriage to Rose de Meuron, his deceased wife's sister.<sup>22</sup> We may assume that they met during the Perrys' year in England in 1863 and on their return from Victoria in 1874. And it is worthy of record that it was Perry's Registrar, Henry Moor, who, as M.P. for Brighton, was instrumental in securing, in June 1865, an amendment to the Colonial Governors (Pension) Bill that finally gained for La Trobe a moiety of pension.<sup>23</sup>

James Grant

## My Dear Mr La Trobe...

Frances Perry, or Fanny as she was known to family and friends, was born to an oil merchant and ship owner, Samuel Cooper and his wife Dorothy, nee Priestley, in Tranby, Yorkshire in 1814.<sup>24</sup> It was through John, one of her many brothers, that she met Charles Perry (1807-1891) when they were both students at Trinity College, Cambridge. Fanny and Charles were both interested in Biblical studies and missionary activities, and they married on 14 October 1841. Charles Perry had been ordained an Anglican priest in 1836.<sup>25</sup>

The couple travelled to Australia late in 1847 after Charles had been offered the new bishopric of Melbourne. They arrived in the colony on 23 January 1848 on the 700-ton ship, the *Stag*, after a long voyage of 108 days.<sup>26</sup>

Their immediate predicament was to find a suitable house. La Trobe did his best to find one which would meet with their approval but, as Mrs Perry wrote:

Mr (La Trobe) has only been able to procure for us a house into which we could not possibly squeeze, in a low situation on the river bank, swarming with mosquitos, and approachable by a road which is jolting enough now, but in winter is up to the axletrees in mud. Of course, we have rejected it...<sup>27</sup>

As a temporary measure, La Trobe suggested a hotel which the Perrys found acceptable in the short term. Not long afterwards, a note in Fanny's diary records:

Our fate, as regards a house, is now settled for a time: we have decided upon going into Mr (La Trobe's) upper house until such time as we build...Our house that is to be contains two sitting rooms, opening into one another with folding doors, and three bedrooms – all on the same floor, as is the case with every house here... Then there is a small store-room, and at about five yards' distance is a small kitchen, with two closets in it, in which servants have hitherto slept – a coach-house, and stables for two horses. This is the whole of the premises. The flower-garden is of moderate size, and there is a small kitchen-garden beyond; and beyond that the Government paddock. Before we go in, C(harles) is going to build two servants' rooms, attached to the kitchen; and join the kitchen to the house, by some kind of covered way. There is a verandah round three sides and a half of the house, and altogether it looks very pretty.<sup>28</sup>

The Perrys stayed at 'Upper Jolimont' until 'Bishopscourt', their official residence, had been built. They moved into their new home in December 1853. It was about this time that La Trobe made his sketch of the rather imposing building which still stands in Lansdowne Street, East Melbourne.

The newly created diocese of Melbourne extended over most of present-day Victoria, and the Perrys were required to travel vast distances in order to keep in touch with the clergy and their parishioners across the colony. Mrs Perry's lively account of some of these journeys, edited by A. de Q. Robin, was published as *Australian Sketches: the journals and letters of Frances Perry* by the Queensberry Hill Press in 1984.

Mrs Perry had, in fact, published her reminiscences under the pseudonym of 'Richard Perry' as *Contributions to an Amateur Magazine in Prose and Verse* in London in 1857. As Peter Sherlock



notes in his entry for Frances Perry in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, she 'revealed a detailed interest in the people and landscapes she encountered'.<sup>29</sup>

She appears to have been a very agreeable woman, interested in all that was going on around her. One Melbourne hostess described her in somewhat patronising terms as 'a lively good little woman, nothing very particular as a companion, and has a good deal of English wit and kitten liveness'.<sup>30</sup>

Charles Perry, Charles La Trobe and their wives became firm friends. When La Trobe decided to go against the law of both Church and State by marrying his deceased wife's sister, a decision which was to cause him great anxiety, both Charles and Fanny rallied to his support. Such a union was prohibited in Britain since it was included in the list of prohibited degrees of relationship in the *Book of Common Prayer*. The List of Prohibited Degrees was first annexed to the *Book of Common Prayer* in 1563. Significant changes to the law relating to affinity did not take place in Britain until the first half of the twentieth century. In fact, the *Deceased Wife's Sister's Marriage Act* was not proclaimed until 1907. This statute, allowing a man to marry his deceased wife's sister, was passed only after what has been described as 'one of the most protracted struggles in British Parliamentary history, involving 46 sessions of debate and 18 successful second readings, a process lasting 65 years. Two letters from the Perrys to La Trobe, dating from this period, are conserved in the large La Trobe archive in the Canton of Neuchâtel in Switzerland, and they are reproduced for the first time in this issue of *La Trobeana*.



Frances Perry, gold locket containing portraits of both Frances and Charles Perry  
Royal Women's Hospital Melbourne Archives.

## The Letters

### Letter 1

My dear Mr La Trobe,

I knew it all! But if you ask me how, I cannot tell you. I have for some time had an impression that you were going to marry(1), and a passage in one of your notes sent at Finidsbury(2) decided me at once as to the person. I confess that had it been any one else, I should have felt a kind of uncomfortable feeling about it, but as it is, my dear husband and I unite in offering you our warmest congratulations and best wishes. No one who knew you as we did could for a moment forget your devoted attachment to your late dear wife. But now, if you do not return to England before January, I shall never forgive you. I think you are bound to introduce us to one we are quite prepared to receive with affection and esteem, though we never know and love her as we did her late dear sister. Charles is very anxious to put a few brotherly lines into my envelope but he is over head and ears today in Colonial Ch(urch) law with Arch(deaco)n Stopford(3) and Mr Stevens or Stephens(4) (I know not which) so that I fear he will not be able to write.

I hope you have received my last note complaining bitterly of being dragged through Ireland, instead of running to Neufchatel. I have mislaid your address and am therefore obliged to send to the care of your brother(5) in Ely Place which, no doubt, occasions the loss of a post. What is to be done with the bracelet?(6) If it is the nuggetty one, I must take special care of it, for if I remember right, it was 30 pounds worth – but perhaps you will find some other private hand to convey it. I cannot write any more because the longer I think of you, the more it vexes me that we cannot go to see you. I have not half expressed our sympathies with you. You must imagine them all, and with love to the dear children, believe me my dear Mr La Trobe,

Yours affectionately,  
Fanny Perry

Archdeaconry, Kells,  
Co. Meath  
Sep. 10, 1855

1. La Trobe was about to marry his deceased wife's widowed sister, Rose de Meuron, in Neuchatel where such a union was within the law.
2. Finidsbury, possibly Finsbury, a suburb of York.

3. Likely to be Archdeacon Edward Adderley Stopford of Meath, Ireland. Ten of his books, mainly on the Irish church, are held in the Lambeth Palace Library.
4. Mr Stevens or Stephens - person unknown.
5. La Trobe's elder brother, John Antes La Trobe (1799-1878) was a priest in the Church of England, and later, became Canon of Carlisle Cathedral. He resided at this time in Ely Place, London.
6. Bracelet – the story of this bracelet is a mystery. Possibly one formerly belonging to Sophie La Trobe.

## Letter 2

Wilton near Brough  
E(ast) R(iding), Yorkshie  
Oct. 25, 1855

My dear Mr La Trobe,

I have been, and am, busily engaged upon my sermons for next month at Cambridge; but I must write a line to congratulate you, which I do most sincerely, upon your marriage(1), and to assure you of my best wishes and prayers for your happiness. We are quite to love your "Rose"(2), and shall hope to see you both shortly after our return to London; but I must leave Mrs Perry to tell you of our movements.

It was with great regret that I gave up the idea of visiting Switzerland; but I felt it a duty to do so. I trust however that we shall have an opportunity of seeing Eleanor and Cecile as well as Charlie(3), before we go (27th Decr)(4).

Ever, my dear Mr La Trobe,  
Your affectionate friend,  
C. Melbourne

P.S. Many thanks for your kind note received yesterday. I have only time to add this.

P.S. Amelia Perry(5) is at home now and can give you, or whom ever you send, the bracelet at any time; or if you think it would be safe to send it as a paper parcel, she will send it by the parcels delivery company wherever you please. We expect to be in Chester Terrace(6) for the night of Nov. 2 – Saturday we go to Cambridge and return to town on Wednesday Nov. 7 on which day we go down to Blackwall(7) to see our ship. If you are likely to be at Woods Hotel Wednesday, Thursday or Friday in that week, we will make a point of calling upon you one or other of those days, and I would write again to say at what hour. We shall be in town also Wednesday, Thursday and Friday of the following week, I think. My heart begins to live very near my throat – only think of the 27th of December! I cannot write more.

With kindest regards to her whom I hope soon to know as your wife, Believe me, dear Mr La Trobe,

Yours affectionately,  
Fanny Perry

1. La Trobe married Rose de Meuron in a civil ceremony in Neuchatel on 3 October 1855.
2. Rose de Meuron La Trobe, nee Montmollin.
3. Eleanor, Cecile and Charlie were the three children of Charles Joseph and Sophie La Trobe who were born in Melbourne.
4. The Perrys were returning to Melbourne on 27 December 1855.
5. Amelia Perry was Charles Perry's sister.
6. Chester Terrace was the address where the Perrys stayed on this visit when in London.
7. Blackwall on the Thames was where the Blackwall frigates were built between the years 1837 and 1869.

The Perrys witnessed the great transformation in Melbourne caused by the unprecedented discovery of gold in enormous quantities. Fanny wrote to her sister-in-law: 'Gold! Gold! Gold! My dear Amelia, we are gone mad with gold; and what is to be the end of it, no one knows!'<sup>31</sup>

It was in 1856 that a deputation of Melbourne clergy and businessmen met with Bishop and Mrs Perry. They were concerned to establish a 'lying-in' or midwifery hospital in Melbourne for women unable to afford the cost of private medical care, and for sick children. The result of these discussions was the establishment of the Melbourne Lying-In Hospital and Infirmary for Diseases of Women and Children in East Melbourne.

A Ladies' Committee, 'later known as the Managing or Providing Committee and the forerunner of the Board of Management' was elected with Fanny Perry as the hospital's inaugural President.<sup>32</sup> She was to remain President of the Committee until 1874.

The historian C. E. Sayers describes Mrs Perry as a 'vigorous, determined charity worker...her zeal...aroused and shocked into the most determined action by the evidence all about her of the need for such work'. He described her

keen-eyed presidency...and her strong-minded executive oversight to the institution itself; of the pointed toe of her buttoned boot probing under beds for what may be there, of mittened fingers

sliding along window sills for signs of dust; or parasol-poking behind curtains for evidence of domestic sloth or carelessness.<sup>33</sup>

Without a doubt, Fanny Perry's effort was a major contribution to women's health in Victoria. Her dedication was marked in the naming of a wing, Frances Perry House, for her in 1979 at the Royal Women's Hospital, and in the hospital's new premises opened in 2008, this acknowledgement continues to be made.

Charles and Fanny Perry left Melbourne on 26 April 1874, and retired to Regent's Park in London. She died exactly one year after her husband on 2 December 1892.<sup>34</sup>

Dianne Reilly

### Endnotes

- 1 This account of La Trobe's family and early life is derived, largely, from Drury, Dianne Reilly, *La Trobe: The Making of a Governor*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 2006.
- 2 La Trobe, Charles Joseph, *The Alpenstock: Or, Sketches of Swiss Scenery and Manners 1825-26*, R B Seeley & W Burnside, London, 1829.
- 3 Irving, Washington, *A Tour on the Prairies*, John Murray, London 1835, p. 5.
- 4 Port Phillip Gazette 9 October 1839.
- 5 Garryowen (Finn, Edmund), *Chronicles of Early Melbourne, 1835-52*, Ferguson & Mitchell, Melbourne, 1888, Vol. I p. 121.
- 6 *The Church in the Colonies, Vol. II* Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, London, 1846, p. 35.
- 7 This account of Perry's family and early life is derived, largely, from Goodman, George, *The Church in Victoria during the episcopate of Bishop Perry*, Melbourne, Melville, Mullen and Slade, 1892 and A de Q Robin, *Charles Perry, Bishop of Melbourne*, University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1967.
- 8 A de Q Robin, *Charles Perry, Bishop of Melbourne*, University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1967 p. 208.
- 9 See generally Holden, Colin, *From Tories at Prayer to Socialists at Mass St Peter's Eastern Hill Melbourne 1846-1990* Melbourne University Press, Carlton 1996, Appendix I, pp. 269-71.
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- 11 Mackle, Francis, *The Footsteps of our Catholic*
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- 12 Perry, Richard, *Contributions to an Amateur Magazine*, L. Booth, London, 1857, pp. 60-61.
- 13 *Ibid.*, p. 63.
- 14 *Church of England Messenger*, Vol. II, Melbourne, 1851, pp. 226-27.
- 15 *ibid.*, Vol. I, 1850, p. 89.
- 16 *ibid.*, Vol. II, 1851, p. 255.
- 17 Perry, Richard, *Contributions to an Amateur Magazine*, L Booth, London, pp. 138-39.
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- 23 Blake, L J *Letters of Charles Joseph La Trobe*, Government Printer, Melbourne, 1975, p. 64.
- 24 'Frances (Fanny) Perry', prepared by Robyn Waymouth, 16 November 2006, [www.thewomenshistory.org.au/biogs/e000091b.htm.1](http://www.thewomenshistory.org.au/biogs/e000091b.htm.1).
- 25 Robin, A. de Q., 'Charles Perry (1807-1891)', in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 5, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1974, 432-436.
- 26 Sherlock, Peter, 'Frances Perry (1814-1892)', in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Supplementary Volume, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 2005, 320-321.
- 27 Robin, A, de Q. ed. *Australian Sketches; The Journals & Letters of Frances Perry*. Carlton, Vic., Queensberry Hill Press, 1984, 71.
- 28 *Op. cit.*, 80.
- 29 Sherlock, *op.cit.*
- 30 Stawell, Mary F. E. *My Recollections*. London, Richard Clay, 1911, 85.
- 31 Robin, *op. cit.*, 5.
- 32 'Frances (Fanny) Perry', prepared by Robyn Waymouth, 16 November 2006, [www.thewomenshistory.org.au/biogs/e000091b.htm.2](http://www.thewomenshistory.org.au/biogs/e000091b.htm.2).
- 33 Quoted 'Frances (Fanny) Perry', *op. cit.*, 4.
- 34 Sherlock, Peter, *op. cit.*

# Australian Light Horse Sculpture – Be'er Sheva, Israel

## A Report by Peter Corlett, July 2008

John Drury has asked me to report to fellow members of the La Trobe Society about my recently dedicated Memorial Sculpture to the Australian Light Horse in Be'er Sheva, Israel. Members may have seen some reference to my work and the event in the media during the latter part of April 2008.

The sculpture is the centrepiece of a large new children's park near the Be'er Sheva town centre, 'The Park of the Australian Soldier'. It marks the famous charge of the 4th and 12th Light Horse Brigades against the Turkish positions in this desert town on 31 October 1917.

The Park project is a gift from Australia to the people of Israel instigated by life-long friends Major-General 'Digger' James (Ret.), former national RSL head, and Mr Richard Pratt.

The sculpture was jointly unveiled by Australian Governor-General, Michael Jeffrey, and Israeli President Shimon Peres on the sunny afternoon of April 28 in the presence of about 1,000 Australian guests including Veterans' Affairs Minister Alan Griffin and shadow Health Minister Joe Hockey. My wife Willys and I were delighted to be supported by La Trobe Society members Dr Dianne Reilly, John Drury, Phil and Doris Moran, and my stepdaughter Chloe, who all attended the unveiling with great enthusiasm.

Perhaps the best surprise of the day followed the official event, when a spontaneous 'Haka' blessing of the sculpture was performed by a group of Kiwi servicemen from a UN Sinai Peninsula peacekeeping unit, who were at the Be'er Sheva unveiling amongst other Australian and New Zealand military performing honour guard duties. The 'Haka' was very appropriate because New Zealand forces, together with the British, also took part in the battle for Be'er Sheva on that day back in 1917.

I am grateful to many who assisted me with this sculpture, including La Trobe Society member John Joyce, a dedicated admirer of the Light Horse and their deeds. I thank John for his advice and for lending me his historic and pristine set

of Light Horse saddle and gear, which was a significant help.

I described my concept for the sculpture in March 2008 just prior to its completion by Meridian Foundry in Fitzroy, as follows:

In approaching this sculpture, a memorial to the heroic and successful charge by the Australian Light Horse on Be'er-Sheva in 1917, I was mindful not only to represent this well known military action, but also to address its historical context.

Australia in 1917 was a new Federation of former British colonies, self-governing for less than 20 years. We were then a lot younger than is the modern state of Israel, now celebrating its 60th anniversary. We were fighting in the Middle East and other parts of the world to support our 'Mother Country', for the family ties and values she endowed us with, prior to our independence in 1901.

Our young nation was keen, in the British presence, to prove ourselves and assert the 'bushman-warrior' identity we had forged during the 1890s Boer War in South Africa. After Federation, every Australian district had a mounted infantry training group of enthusiastic volunteers. The best of these self-reliant individuals from rural areas, country towns and city outskirts, formed the backbone of the Australian Light Horse and its dash on Be'er-Sheva in this act of almost naïve courage so important to the success of the charge.

In 1917 most Light Horsemen knew little of Be'er-Sheva and its ancient history. Its landscape, reminiscent of inland Australia, may have reminded them of home, and they understood the importance of water to man and horse. But they did not know the water wells of Be'er-Sheva's bedrock were Abraham's, patriarch of the three great monotheistic religions and conceptual founder of their ethical values as Christians.

The most fundamental part of my memorial design is the equilateral triangle. In the ground there is a triangular pool with a triangular plinth over it, symbolising the three Middle Eastern religions bound together in one place in dynamic tension. Three faces looking outwards away from each other but connected and bound together by their apexes or sharp joining points.

Using the elements of the triangular pool and plinth plus the horse and rider, a third element forming an appropriate trilogy, I represent the Be'er-sheva's ancient history overlain by 700

years of Turkish occupation with the triangular plinth skewed over the pool, and finally on top of the occupying plinth, the dashing Australian Light Horseman of 1917, paving the way toward the modern Be'er-Sheva and Israel of today.

Over the years I have carried out a number of other Memorial Commissions, probably the best known being my sculpture of Sir Edward 'Weary' Dunlop in St Kilda Rd., Melbourne (also at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra). Another is my 1998 sculpture 'Cobbers' located at Fromelles in northern France. The second cast of 'Cobbers' will be unveiled in the grounds of the Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance in July 2008.

Throughout my career I have considered myself as basically a 'portrait' sculptor, one with a compassionate and gentle eye. It is therefore interesting that so much of my time has been devoted to World War One memorial works. I believe my empathy for this era and genre derives from my father's World War One service in France – the 'Great War'. It was a period of unaccountable horror that he would never really talk about. All I ever heard about his time in France were the good times – of leave in Paris, of the pretty girls and the petit-fours; never about the fighting, the killing, the death and destruction.

In 1991, I was surprised to be urgently commissioned by the Commonwealth Government, to create a Memorial in the old 1917 battlefield of Bullecourt in France; it was to be a 'typical Bullecourt Digger'. My immediate inspiration for the work was my own dad and the mantle-piece photograph of him and the other earnest, eager fresh faced young men who were about to embark on 'their great adventure'. They didn't know they were leaving an Australian arcadia to go to a French hell. My 'Bullecourt Digger' sculpture attempted to show an innocent, cocky, upstanding young man loaded up with the accoutrements of war, just as I imagined my own father may have been upon his arrival in France.

While the 'Aussie Digger' sculpture was being cast at the Foundry, I had time for more research about my dad's unknown-to-me war history. I was amazed to discover he had served in this dreadful Bullecourt battle, and that out of his company of 110 men, he was one of only 15 who returned at battle's end. I now believe my father's reticence to tell me his horrific story has created in me a longing to express and address this traumatic chapter of his generation, and to put to rest his and others' pain.

My Light Horse Be'er Sheva Memorial, also a WW1 subject, is however a more dynamic work

expressing the 'adrenaline moment' of breakthrough and victory. The memorial service at the unveiling in Be'er Sheva on April 28th, 2008, was a very moving ceremony. Credit for this belongs to the people of Be'er Sheva, the Australian Department of Veterans' Affairs, and especially Sam Lipski and the Pratt Foundation.

Peter Corlett  
July 2008



## Obituaries

It is with great regret that the deaths of two valued members of the La Trobe Society are recorded in this edition of *La Trobeana*.

**Suzanne Hunt**, social historian, museum curator, garden historian and writer, who died at her family home on 7 March 2008, was a staunch member of the La Trobe Society. She greatly admired Charles Joseph La Trobe and his dynamic vision for Victoria, and felt that his role in establishing Victoria as we know it today should be better known. As Anne Latreille wrote in her *Age* obituary, for Suzanne 'history was not an academic pursuit but a lively exploration of ordinary lives, things and places, and of the tales they could tell ... she sought to make the past and the present relevant to the future'. Suzanne actively supported the role in the community of the State Library of Victoria, sponsoring the major exhibition, *Gardenesque*, in 2004-05. She wrote extensively on the history of Australian gardens, notably in *Australian Garden History*, journal of the Australian Garden History Society. Our deepest sympathy goes to her husband, Robin, and to her sons.

**Diana Baillieu**, a foundation member of the La Trobe Society died on 29 April 2008. The mother of seven children including Victoria's Opposition Leader, Ted Baillieu, and La Trobe Society member, Kate Baillieu, Diana was pre-deceased by her husband, Darren Baillieu. She was the great-niece of Christina Macpherson who, in 1895, inspired Banjo Paterson to write the words for 'Waltzing Matilda' as she accompanied him on the piano. Her greatest love was her family, but she had a tremendous capacity for friendship, exemplified by her hospitality to so many and by her prodigious letter-writing activities. In common with La Trobe, Diana loved her large and demanding garden. With her lifelong interest in history, she particularly admired the fine statue of La Trobe erected by the Society on the forecourt of the State Library. She will be greatly missed.

Our deepest sympathy is extended to member **Diana Morgan** and to her family on the death of her dear husband **Nigel Morgan**.

Dianne Reilly  
Honorary Secretary

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