

LA TROBEANA



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

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La Trobeana

Journal of the C J La Trobe Society Inc.
Vol. 8, No. 1, March 2009

Guest Editor: Dianne Reilly

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Editorial Committee

Dr Fay Woodhouse, Chair
Me Janet Roberts Billett
Mrs Loreen Chambers
Dr Dianne Reilly

For contributions and 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

2009 promises to be another interesting and educational year for members of the La Trobe Society. It is important that we continue to mark Charles Joseph's birthday each year at La Trobe's Cottage, even if only to remind ourselves of the fact that his life began only a little over two hundred years ago, and yet, how forcefully his vision for Melbourne and Victoria has been felt.

We will learn a great deal about some of the problems faced by La Trobe's administration when we hear Paul Mullaly's lecture to the

joint membership of the La Trobe Society and the Royal Historical Society in June on Crime in Port Phillip.

And, as always, the Society's valuable journal, *La Trobeana*, will make its appearance three times in the course of the year.

I look forward to seeing you at some, or all, of the Society's events.

Rodney Davidson
President

Forthcoming Events:

La Trobe's Birthday
Sunday 22 March, 2009
at 5.00 p.m.

By the time that you have received this edition of the journal, the celebration of Charles Joseph La Trobe's 208th birthday will have taken place on Sunday 22 March with an evening picnic at La Trobe's Cottage in South Yarra.

Speakers: Martin Purslow, Chief Executive Officer of the National Trust of Australia (Victoria), on actions planned for La Trobe's home and the formation of a 'Friends of La Trobe's Cottage' group.

Members Helen and John Botham: a special presentation on La Trobe's Cottage.

Inverleigh Cemetery
Thursday 9 April, 2009
at 2.00 p.m.

The President of the Geelong and Region Branch of the National Trust of Australia (Victoria), Mrs Jennifer Bantow, has invited all La Trobe Society members to join with members of the National Trust to celebrate the completion of the restoration of the grave of Charlotte Pellet, Housekeeper to Charles and Sophie La Trobe at Jolimont. The gathering at the graveside will be followed by afternoon tea at Inverleigh Mechanics Hall.

RSVP Friday 3 April
Jennifer Bantow phone 5240 3446

**La Trobe Society/Royal
Historical Society AGL
Shaw Lecture
Tuesday 9 June, 2009 from
6.00-8.00 p.m.**

Please hold Tuesday 9 June. in your diary for this important event in the Society's calendar.

La Trobe Society member Paul Mullally QC will deliver this year's joint lecture at the Royal Historical Society of Victoria, a'Beckett Street Melbourne.

The title of his address is: Crime in Port Phillip.

Refreshments will be served from 6.00 p.m., and the lecture will commence at 6.45 p.m.

Cost: \$20.00 per person.

A flyer to remind you will be sent out closer to the date.

**Annual General Meeting
and Annual Dinner
Tuesday 11 August, 2009
at 6.30 p.m.**

The Society's Annual General Meeting, to be followed by dinner, will be held at the Lyceum Club, Ridgway Place, Melbourne on Tuesday 11 August at 6.30 p.m.

Following the business of the meeting, an illustrated lecture will be given by member Mr Kenneth Park, freelance lecturer, art curator,

presenter, fund-raiser, tour leader and writer. His topic for this illustrated lecture will be: The Intrepid Traveller: Charles Joseph La Trobe.

**Annual Pioneer Service
Sunday 1 November, 2009
at 10.00 a.m.**

Rev John Sugars, Vicar of St James' Old Cathedral, corner King and Batman Streets, West Melbourne, has again invited all La Trobe Society members and friends to the annual Pioneer Service. This year marks the 170th anniversary of the laying by Charles Joseph La Trobe of the foundation stone of the Cathedral's predecessor, St James' Church, on the corner of William and Little Collins Street, Melbourne, on 9 November 1839.

**Christmas Cocktails
December, 2009**

The Society's Christmas Cocktails for 2009 will be held on a date in December and at a venue to be advised.

A Word from the Treasurer

The finances of the C.J. La Trobe Society are in a healthy state but, to keep it that way, we need to enlist some new members. If you know of anyone personally who you think may be interested, please talk to them and invite them to join. If you need membership forms sent to prospective members, please contact me on 0412 584 060. The Society's high-quality journal *La Trobeana* is produced three times per year with very interesting articles. Enjoyable and educational functions are held four or more times each year, and the committee is always looking for potential events that could interest the members - so if you have any ideas, please let us know. The strength of the Society depends solely on the number of members and their input.

This year, the Society will be awarding the third C.J. La Trobe Society Fellowship under the auspices of the State Library of Victoria. To date,

three very generous sponsors have supported the Fellowships, and we are now looking for a sponsor for 2010.

The amount needed for a 6-months research grant is \$25,000. This is fully tax deductible since it is paid to the State Library of Victoria. In recognition of such support, the La Trobe Society presents to each sponsor at the Christmas Cocktails function a bronze bust of La Trobe by sculptor Peter Corlett, suitably inscribed to the donor. If you know of somebody who might be interested to be next year's sponsor, please let me know and a letter can be sent containing all the relevant details. An alternative proposal would be for five individual donors to each contribute \$5,000 as a tax deduction.

Please give all the above points some consideration and thank you for past support.

John Drury
Honorary Treasurer
March, 2009

Charlotte Pellet, 1800-1877

Housekeeper at Jolimont

This article is based upon a most enjoyable conversation in the heat of a summer's day with two members of the La Trobe Society, Mrs Joy Harley, Charlotte Pellet's great- great-granddaughter, and her husband, Allen Harley, whose research and family archives have proved an invaluable resource.

The Canton of Neuchâtel is situated on the shores of the spectacular Lake of Neuchâtel in Switzerland, not far from the French border and the Jura mountains. Nestled at the conjunction of three lakes – Neuchâtel, Morat and Bienne – the city of Neuchâtel is about an hour's train ride from Geneva. The canton had from very early times, and still has today a dynamic economy, based primarily on the watch and clock-making industry and on wine production. In addition, it has a long history of private banking, a sector upon which much of the wealth of the aristocratic families of Neuchâtel is built. Neuchâtel is a university town, the University of Neuchâtel being established in 1909, based on the Academy of Neuchâtel founded in 1838 by King Frederick William IV of Prussia, Prince of Neuchâtel. It is also the place where Philippe Suchard, one of the pioneers of Swiss chocolate, set up his first factory in 1826.

In 2011, Neuchâtel will celebrate its 1000th anniversary. During these

ten centuries, the city which gives its name to the canton, has gone from a small village clustered around the 'new castle' (neu-châtel) to become the capital city in 1815 of one of the twenty-three cantons of the Swiss Confederation. The seat of power from earliest times is established in the impressive château dominating the city.

It was in this historic and beautiful canton that Charlotte Matthey was born in 1800. From a young age, she worked as a nurse in the household of the Montmollin family, one of the longest established and most aristocratic families of the canton. In this capacity, she had developed a warm and caring relationship with all the many children in the family, none more so than with Sophie, the eighth of the thirteen children of Comte Frédéric Auguste de Montmollin, a Swiss Councillor of State, and his wife, Rose Augustine, née de Meuron. In 1836, she married Jean Pellet,, a member of an extensive family involved in wine production, and the watch and clockmaking industry developed in this part of Switzerland. After a brief, unhappy marriage, Charlotte obtained a divorce in 1840. Early in 1841, she went out to Port Phillip as a cabin passenger on board *the Neptune* with her only child, a daughter, Rose Augustine, who had been named for Sophie's sister and mother. In fact, Rose Pellet was the god-daughter

of Rose Augustine de Meuron, née de Montmollin, the youngest sister of Sophie La Trobe. They arrived in Melbourne on 23 March, and lived at La Trobe's Cottage in Jolimont until 1854.

La Trobe's eldest child, Agnes Louisa, later the Comtesse de Salis, recalled in a letter to Rose Amiet, née Pellet, the day they reached their new home:

I can still remember your arrival. You came with your mother when I was already in bed, and the next morning, I was in a great hurry to see you, and your mother opened the door of your room, and you were standing half-dressed on a stool. I think we must have been about four or five then.¹

Charlotte came to Melbourne warmly recommended by Sophie La Trobe's mother, Madame de Montmollin, and she proved to be a great support for her and a mainstay of the family. Dr Marguerite Hancock in her book *Colonial Consorts*, records:

Charlotte was an excellent servant, loyal, efficient and completely trustworthy. When the La Trobes went to Van Diemen's Land for four months, they left Jolimont in her care; James Graham reported that he had found her 'very busy scrubbing away at the floors and as particular about having everything as clean and tidy as if you were

at home yourselves'. For all her virtues as a housekeeper, it was Charlotte's connection with her home that Sophie La Trobe must have prized most.²

Certainly, in the nineteenth century, the housekeeper held a superior position within the structure of the home as the representative of the mistress in all domestic management, care and authority.³ This description of trust applied absolutely to the role of Charlotte Pellet in the La Trobe household. In so many respects, she was treated as a member of the family. Her daughter, Rose, was a playmate of all the La Trobe children, especially of Agnes since they were the same age, and a lifelong friendship developed from their childhood.

Not only did Charlotte carry out most of the daily domestic chores at Jolimont, but she was indispensable to Sophie La Trobe in many personal aspects of her life in a primitive country. Three further children were born at Jolimont: Eleanora Sophia (Nelly) in 1842; Mary Cecilia (Cécile) the next year; and Charles Albert (Charley) on Christmas Day in 1845. Sophie, who had come from a home in Neuchâtel where servants were plentiful and assistance of all kinds readily available, would certainly have found childbirth in the basic environment of their pre-fabricated cottage at Jolimont totally daunting and not a little fearsome. No doubt,

¹ Agnes de Salis to Rose Amiet, 2 July 1909. La Trobe-Amiet Letters, 1853-1934, La Trobe Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria. MS 7868-7873. In fact, both Rose Pellet and Agnes La Trobe were three years old.

² Hancock, Marguerite *Colonial Consorts*, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 2001, 16-17.

³ Higman, B W *Domestic Service in Australia*, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 2002, 135.

she was somewhat reassured with Charlotte at her side to assist in the deliveries, possibly with the help of a midwife, and to maintain the equilibrium of the house for the other very young children and her husband, the Superintendent of the colony.

Sophie La Trobe had never enjoyed robust good health. Her husband was frequently preoccupied about her, but could still joke with his publisher, John Murray:

(She has) not been over strong since her arrival in these regions of the globe, though enjoying good general health. I am not quite sure that standing with the head downwards, as you know that we are all obliged to do here, suits the female constitution, though one gets wonderfully used to it after the first month's trial.⁴

Following a carriage accident in 1848, Sophie was in decidedly poorer health. It would seem that she was expecting a fifth child in August of that year and had had a miscarriage with disastrous results⁵. After the accident, she was:

very ill for nearly 4 months most of which time I was confined to my bed, into the house on the sofa. I have been, thank God, much better for some time but I have not

yet recovered my normal health and do not know whether I shall ever recover it.⁶

In fact, the continuous weakness and debilitating neuralgic headaches she experienced forced a painful and, as it turned out, final separation from her dear husband when she left Melbourne in February 1853 with her three youngest children to seek medical attention at home in Switzerland. Her strongest support during those years of ill-health so far from the comforts of home was her friend Charlotte Pellet.

Portraits of Charlotte reveal a strong, capable, intelligent and refined woman, used to taking on responsibility for the day-to-day well-being of children, and competently maintaining order in those daily essentials of any household. While the La Trobes relied greatly on her, she also had to concern herself with the upbringing of her own daughter. After the return in 1846 of Agnes to Switzerland for her education, Rose Pellet became the playmate of the three children born in Melbourne, and no doubt shared their lessons when a Swiss governess, Mademoiselle Béguin, arrived in 1850.⁷

The numerous letters from Charles Joseph La Trobe to Charlotte and to Rose after his departure from Melbourne on 5 May 1854 show that

⁴ Charles Joseph La Trobe to John Murray, 15 Dec. 1840, in Smiles, Samuel *A Publisher and his Friends*, Lond., John Murray., 1891, vol.2, 457.

⁵ Charles Joseph La Trobe, *Australian Notes; Memoranda of Journeys, Excursions & Absences – Port Phillip & Victoria, 1839-1854*, 323. La Trobe Papers, La Trobe Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria. MSM541.

⁶ Sophie La Trobe to Susan Norton, 15 Sept. 1848. Norton Papers, La Trobe Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria, MS 13323.

⁷ Sophie La Trobe to Agnes La Trobe, 27 June 1850, La Trobe Neuchâtel Archive.

he had always regarded them as part of his family. In the first of them, written just before his departure, he wrote:

Letter 1

Bishopscourt
29 April 1854

Dear Charlotte,

Though at your own express desire, I leave you, with Rose, in Victoria, and pray earnestly that God may bless you with health & happiness & contentment as long as you remain there. I wish you to feel assured that your connection with me and my children is by no means broken.

I shall always count you as one of my family – and one object which I have in view in leaving you this memorandum is to state that if at any further time circumstances might make you desirous of returning to Europe, you have only to state your wish to either my friend Mr Powlett, or Mr D C Macarthur of the Bank of Australasia and they will readily furnish you with the means of rejoining me, and wherever I am, you will be sure to find a home, both for my children's sake, & for the sake of her whom the Lord has seen good to take from me. His will be done.

May God bless and keep [you] in time and eternity.

C. J. La Trobe⁸

La Trobe, on the eve of his departure for England and Switzerland, gave Rose Pellet away at her marriage to Frédéric Guillaume Amiet on 3 May 1854.⁹ The ceremony was presided over by the Bishop of Melbourne, Charles Perry, at St Peter's Church, Eastern Hill, the parish church of the La Trobe family. Amiet, a vinedresser from the town of Boudry on the Lake of Neuchâtel, had arrived in the colony in 1849, and had gone into partnership with Frédéric Breguet and David Pettaval, two other Swiss vigneron hoping to make their fortune in Port Phillip, at their 'Neuchâtel' vineyard on the Barwon River. Following the wedding, Charlotte joined Rose and her husband at his property, 'The Hermitage', at Murgheboluc, also on the Barwon River. Georgiana McCrae, close friend of the La Trobes, recorded in her diary that Amiet wines were drunk at the celebratory dinner to mark separation.¹⁰ The first and last of the four Amiet children, Frédéric, Abraham Louis, Charlotte Sophia, and Edward William were born there, and the others were born at Inverleigh before the untimely death of their father in February 1864, following a fall from a dray when he was returning from Ballarat. Rose arranged for a manager for 'The Hermitage' and moved with her children to Inverleigh where she lived until her death in 1910.

⁸ Charles Joseph La Trobe to Charlotte Pellet, 29 April 1854. La Trobe Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria, MS7868-7873.

⁹ Marriage certificate, 3 May 1854. Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages, Victoria.

¹⁰ McCrae, Hugh ed. *Georgiana's Journal*. Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1934, 180.

Her mother had pre-deceased her. The historian, Joan Ritchie, one of Charlotte Pellet's great, great-granddaughters, recorded her death:

On 9 April 1877, Charlotte Pellet, Swiss housekeeper at Jolimont Cottage, and an old established friend of the La Trobe family, passed peacefully away at Woodbine Cottage, Inverleigh, in the western district of Victoria, just four months after the death of her master, Charles Joseph La Trobe. She died at the home of her only daughter, Rose Amiet, who had grown up with the La Trobe children at Jolimont... It was fitting that she should die in that part of Victoria which was called "little Neuchâtel", just a short distance from Inverleigh which folds into a green and picturesque valley about 18 miles from Geelong. As the vigneron, François de Castella explained, Swiss vignerons began planting vines in the area about 1842, and there had grown up 'a sort of village composed of brick cottages, known as the Little Neuchâtel'. Swiss settlers, and the Swiss consul if he visited Geelong used to gather together at Woodbine Cottage and talk of the old country...'.¹¹

An undated report from a contemporary newspaper reported Charlotte's death, and pointed out that sterling quality of loyalty which governed her life as the Housekeeper of Jolimont:

An old identity connected with the days before the gold discoveries has passed away, in the person of Mrs Charlotte Pelet (sic) of Inverleigh, at the advanced age of 76...Photographs and letters from the family (the La Trobes) in England are carefully cherished, one of Mr La Trobe having been taken a year or two before his death, when he was totally blind. This loyalty to an old master is a rare and precious thing in this young community, and deserves to be noticed.

The State Library of Victoria has a collection of fourteen letters from La Trobe and his children in England to the Amiet family in Victoria which spans the years 1854 to 1934, and show to what extent the friendship was valued by them all.¹² One privately-owned letter from Charles Joseph La Trobe to Charlotte Pellet, which has not previously been published, is reproduced here to demonstrate La Trobe's own loyalty to a faithful servant:

Letter 2

London
20th February 1855

My dear Charlotte,

The enclosed letter was forwarded to me the other day to send to you. It will doubtless give you pleasure & shew you that you are not

¹¹ Ritchie, Joan, 'Housekeeper of Jolimont', *Victorian Historical Journal*, vol.. 47, no.1, 1976, 277-283. in Fact La Trobe died on 4 December 1875

¹² La Trobe-Amiet Letters, 1853-1934, La Trobe Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria, MS 7868-7873.

forgotten by the dear children etc. in Switzerland, and I assure you that you are not by me, or Agnes, or little Charlie in England. Agnes is now at school, but very happy, at Southwark near Newark, under the care of the same excellent lady who educated our dear friend Mrs Perry. She was too young to take charge of her father's house, if he had had one, and it was a pity to leave her without regular means of improvement for her mind. Charlie is at school in Kent, and very happy – not a bad, tho' a very giddy boy. He has grown very much as you may suppose. I am for the time in London, a little lonely, but finding enough to do and to think about. My health is good, and tho' I have my share of coughs and colds, I do not care for the severe winter, as long as it is not wet. I shall probably make some arrangement to bring the little girls to England in the course of the summer, but I do not pretend to see far into the future – but would leave all in the hands of our merciful God. You may be sure that I do not forget the past with all its joys & sorrows, & often recall your long and faithful service - and good little Rose, whom I heard some time since from Mrs Perry, was well and happy. I hope she takes care of you. I am sorry to tell you that the two last mails from Switzerland have brought me very unsatisfactory news about our dear Madame de Montmollin's health. I fear we shall not keep her long – indeed I have everything prepared

¹³ Charles Joseph La Trobe to Charlotte Pellet, 20 February 1855. Collection: Joy and Allen Harley.

to set off at a moment's notice. She was very ill with inflammation of the lungs – but when my last letter was written on the 16th, was a little better. I do not like to delay this letter. Pray write to me, and believe me ever.

Your very attached friend,
C J La Trobe

(P.S.) Many kind things to Rose and her husband.¹³

Dianne Reilly



Rose Amiet and two of her children, circa 1865.

La Trobe Society Fellowship, 2009-10

The C J La Trobe Society Inc., in association with the State Library of Victoria, awards a La Trobe Society Fellowship each year for the study of the colonial period of Victoria's history during Charles Joseph La Trobe's administration as Superintendent and Lieutenant-Governor (1839-54). The Fellowship is sponsored in 2009-10 by the AGL Shaw Foundation. One Fellowship will be offered for a period of six months, with a grant of \$25,000.

The Fellowship is intended for the use of the resources of the State Library of Victoria. Subject to this general consideration, the award is to be used to research into and write about the colonial period of Victoria's history during Charles Joseph La Trobe's administration as Superintendent and Lieutenant-Governor (1839-54). It may be extended to cover the period immediately before La Trobe's arrival, or the effects of his tenure after his departure.

For further information, please consult the State Library of Victoria web page at the following address:

www.slv.vic.gov.au/programs/research

LA TROBE SOCIETY FELLOWSHIPS – interim reports

2007-08 – Dr Frances Thiele

'To Protect and Civilise:
Superintendent La Trobe and the
Abandonment of the Port Phillip
Aboriginal Protectorate Experiment'

In 2007 I was very fortunate to be appointed the inaugural recipient of the La Trobe Society Fellowship at the State Library of Victoria, sponsored by the Rodney Davidson family. I had been working for several years on the administrative history of Aboriginal Affairs in Victoria and was particularly interested in the Port Phillip Aboriginal Protectorate. The Fellowship gave me a unique opportunity to pursue this historical interest specifically in relation to Superintendent La Trobe.

After an official announcement ceremony, the Library gave me access to a particularly nice study room off the Dome Reading Room. I was also given an out of hours access card to the Library so I could come and go whenever I wanted to. I have kept this 'Schlage card', as it is called, because it proudly asserted my status as 'scholar'! I was also given the luxury of access to the Library Foundation Lounge.

I decided to take up the Fellowship for a year part-time and what a wonderful year it was. The collections of the State Library are amazing and to

have the time to explore them more fully was a privilege. I was very fortunate to have Dianne Reilly as my State Library and La Trobe Society contact. Dianne has been very encouraging and I cannot thank her enough for her support during my time as Fellow.

As for the results of my work, I have completed a draft manuscript of a book tentatively titled 'To Protect and Civilise: Superintendent La Trobe and the Abandonment of the Port Phillip Aboriginal Protectorate Experiment'. It will be the first book length study of the management of the Protectorate and seeks to explain why La Trobe found the supervision of Aboriginal and settler relationships in the early years of settlement such a problematic aspect of his Superintendency. This is a complex story about how a man deeply imbued with the spirit of his Christian evangelical beliefs struggled with the failure of all attempts to convert and 'civilise' Aboriginal people. Embittered by the experience, he was left disappointed and despondent, unable to recommend any alternative suggestions for the assistance of Aboriginal people except the harshest of proposals that he thought were 'against the spirit of the age'.

Dr Frances Thiele

2008-09 – Dr Wayne Calow

'Perceptions of Place:
The Exploration and Settlement of
Gippsland 1839-1844'

I was awarded the La Trobe Society Fellowship, sponsored by the generosity of the Shoppee Family, at the State Library of Victoria in mid-2008. I commenced my research into relevant material held in the Library's collections in August of that year, and anticipate completing my work at the end of June 2009 in preparation for publication.

The time frame for this project covers a relatively short period of history, but the years are significant. In 1839, Angus McMillan made his first concerted efforts to penetrate the vast *terra incognita* that was to be known as Gippsland. By the end of 1844, the entire district had been occupied by squatters.

Most histories of Gippsland do not address the fundamental question of why the region was explored and settled so rapidly. The answer is found in the expanding market for the supply of livestock to the Van Diemen's Land penal system. Both McMillan and James Macarthur sought to find grazing land and a port at Corner Inlet in their expeditions into Gippsland in 1840. Writing in 1884, one of the Gippsland squatters, John King, stated that McMillan's aim was to exploit the Van Diemen's Land market. McMillan made his first shipment of cattle from Port Albert to Hobart in May 1842.

When viewed in this historical context, many of the subsequent events and historical accounts are more meaningful. Most of the shire-based histories of Gippsland take a 'founding fathers' view of history; the research for this project demonstrates that Gippsland was explored and settled in the main by pragmatic businessmen. The subsequent flourishing livestock trade with Van Diemen's Land demonstrated this, and made the fortunes of men such as McMillan and King.

One of the interesting aspects of the early history of Gippsland is that there was no government involvement from 1841 to 1844. Charles La Trobe was initially supportive of settlement in the area. He made a commitment to James Macarthur in 1840 to order a survey of Corner Inlet to encourage settlement. The paddle steamer *Clonmel* was wrecked near the inlet in January 1841; during salvage operations, the inlet was explored and glowing reports of an 'inland sea' were published in the Melbourne newspapers. At the instigation of the press, La Trobe again made the commitment to order a survey of Corner Inlet.

An expedition in the barque *Singapore* left Melbourne in February 1841 with the intention of establishing a settlement at Corner Inlet. The day after the *Singapore* left, Henry Dendy arrived from England with the first order for a special survey. This order allowed

him to purchase any land of his choosing in the Port Phillip District, providing it was not a government township. La Trobe and Governor Gipps were at once opposed to the special survey system.

While this was unfolding, the *Singapore* expedition continued. The party explored the Albert and Tarra Rivers and established a camp at what was to become Port Albert. Some of the men set off overland and explored the plains as far east as the Gippsland Lakes before returning to Melbourne. Two of the party, William Adams Brodribb and John Orr, left a detailed account of the expedition.

In April 1841, John Orr purchased a special survey on the west bank of the Tarra River on behalf of the *Singapore* party, while John Reeve purchased a survey on the east bank of the river. Gipps and La Trobe feared that the special survey system would lead to wholesale land speculation in Gippsland. They obstructed Orr and Reeve for the next two years.

When the special surveys were finally gazetted in early 1843, the two men set about establishing their own towns. The government refused to release any land for sale in the Port Albert area, except for a small area at Shipping Point where the Port Albert township was established in 1844. Reeve's town of Tarraville was to become the leading township in Gippsland from the 1840s to the 1860s.

The availability of good grazing land and a market in Van Diemen's Land encouraged many squatters from the Monaro and Port Phillip Districts to take up runs in Gippsland. The establishment of the towns, the port and the market were accomplished without any government assistance. Convicts provided much of the labour on the squatting runs, but the coastal areas soon became a haven for escaped convicts and assigned convict servants.

In April 1843, Robert Russell and H B Morris sailed from Melbourne to Port Albert in the cutter *Midge* under the command of Lieutenant Edward Kirsopp RN. Both Russell and Morris published accounts of their journey in the *Port Phillip Herald*. The accounts are interesting in their own right, with many barbs directed at the government. They praised the industry of Orr and Reeve, and their progress without any government assistance. Both Russell and Morris, particularly the latter, spoke of the plight of the local Aboriginal people. Morris's main criticism was that, as the government had failed to take any involvement in Gippsland, the worst elements of European society had been free to inflict their depravity on the Aboriginal people. He argued that the Europeans' system of justice was unfair on the Aboriginal people, who did not understand it and lived by their own customs. He also argued that the government had failed the settlers and the Aboriginal people. As European people moved into Aboriginal territory, there was bound

to be conflict, yet the government had done nothing to protect the settlers from the Aboriginal people, nor had it done anything to protect the Aboriginal population from the settlers, thus making the situation worse than it need be.

Charles Tyers arrived in Gippsland in January 1844 as the Commissioner for Crown Lands. Whether the lot of the Aboriginal people was any better under his jurisdiction is debatable. One of the squatters, Patrick Coady Buckley, recorded in his journal the hunting of Aboriginal people with the Native Police who were under Tyers' command.

Dr Wayne Caldow

La Trobe Signage

Numerous place-names in Victoria have been created in honour of Charles Joseph La Trobe. Can you contribute a photograph to this ongoing series?



Sign at Cape Otway.

Photographer: Mathilde Chevalier,
February 2009 ©



Top left: Mme Matthey, mother of Charlotte Pellet. Watercolour, c.1840.

Top right: Charlotte Pellet. Watercolour, c. 1840.

Lower: Neuchâtel. Coloured lithograph, 19th century. Collection: Joy and Allen Harley.





Mathilde Chevalier 2009



Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. re-administering the oath of office to Barack Obama on Wednesday in the White House.

Photo: Pete Souza

A New Version of Ben Bolt

Melbourne bookseller Michael O'Brien has passed on to La Trobeana a copy of a satirical poem which appeared in the first issue of Melbourne *Punch* in 1856. Ben Bolt is a very small town in Jim Wells County, Texas. The original poem *Ben Bolt* was written by the American poet Thomas Dunn English in 1842. It was set to music in 1848 by Nelson Kneass (1823-1868/9), a composer from Philadelphia. The musical form achieved great popularity especially in minstrel shows, and many parodies were written. This would seem to be one of them!

A New Version of Ben Bolt.

Oh, don't you remember La Trobe, Ben Bolt,
Poor La Trobe whom we all so assailed;
He wept with delight at the smallest success,
And trembled with fear when he failed.
In the "ancien regime" of the ill-managed past,
With little respect we must own;
~~He~~ have buried the memory of poor old La Trobe,
And henceforth we should let him alone.

II.

Oh, don't you remember old Melbourne, Ben Bolt,
When gold diggings first were found out,
When we'd five feet of mud in the wharves and the streets,
And each night stickers-up roamed about.
Ah, those were the days, I believe you, Ben Bolt!
When money could quickly be made;
We might buy what we liked in both market and store,
For we couldn't go wrong in a trade.

III.

Oh, don't you perceive Sir Charles Hotham, Ben Bolt,
And the change that has since taken place:
There are lots of us now, I am sadly afraid,
Who've been left much behind in the race.
We may trade, we may speak, we may write, we may work,
But it's not as it once "used to were,"
For wages and profits alike have gone down,
And we don't go-a-head I declare.

IV.

Oh, don't you believe it, my own Ben Bolt,
That we won't forge ahead once again;
There's a glorious future in store for us yet,
In spite of our trouble and pain.
Charles Hotham can't thwart us for long, Ben Bolt,
Though his eggs and his pork be sold dear,
If he take himself off in good time old boy,
We need not rejoice o'er his *bier*.

Mathilde Chevalier

A number of you will have met Mademoiselle Mathilde Chevalier at the Christmas Cocktails function at the Melbourne Savage Club on 5 December. Her photograph appears in the centre pages. Mathilde spent six months in Australia, working and travelling, and coincidentally, improving her English before returning to Lyon on 28 February to continue her studies in a school of management.

Mathilde is a member of the Latrobe family, but she is not descended in the line of Victoria's first Lieutenant-Governor. Her paternal grandmother is Maité Chevalier, née Montjean, of Sanary-sur-Mer on the French Riviera. One of her antecedents was Jean Joachim Latrobe (1771-1832), a great-uncle of Charles Joseph La Trobe.

Benjamin Henry La Trobe

The inauguration of the new President of the United States, Barack Obama, was an event which focussed the attention of the world. Due to a legal hiccup, Mr Obama had to take the oath of allegiance a second time – in the Map Room of the White House. Please see centre pages for photograph.

What most viewers of this historic occasion did not notice was the portrait hanging on the wall in the background. It is, in fact, a portrait of Charles Joseph La Trobe's illustrious uncle, Benjamin Henry La Trobe, popularly known as 'the great American architect of the nineteenth century'. As has previously been reported in the pages of this journal, Benjamin Henry was, among many important commissions, the architect of extensions and the reconstruction of both the White House and the Capitol buildings in Washington DC.

Restoration Of Charlotte Pellet's Grave

The final resting place of Charlotte Pellet is in a tranquil cemetery at Inverleigh, a rural township on the Hamilton highway 28 kilometres to the west of Geelong. The grave is within the north-eastern quarter of the cemetery, which is the Church of England section, beside a handsome Bhutan pine and alongside the original entrance road from the east, indicated by the old wrought iron gates now part of a fenced paddock. The more recent entrance to the cemetery is from the south side in Cemetery Road through later iron gates with brick pillars.



Old eastern entrance to Inverleigh cemetery

The modest elegant headstone made of Barrabool stone is carved in a foliage design at the top, with a small white marble panel attached.



The inscription carved on the marble panel reads:

SACRED
TO THE MEMORY OF
CHARLOTTE PELET
DIED 9TH APRIL 1876
AGED 76 YEARS
DIEU SEUL EST MON LIBERATEUR,
MON ESPOIR, MON ASILE,
SOUS LES MAINS D'UN TEL
PROTECTEUR,
MON AME SOIT TRANQUILLE.

[God alone is my liberator,
my hope, my shelter,
beneath the hand of such a protector,
may my soul rest in peace]¹

Swiss records show that the name was spelt as Pellet but, in English usage, one 'l' was sometimes dropped.¹ Although the headstone spells her name as Pelet and records that Charlotte died on 9 April 1876, her death certificate states her surname is Pellet, and gives the date of death as 8 April 1877, a

¹ Inverleigh Cemetery: Headstone Transcriptions © Dianne Hughes, Teesdale, Vic.

² Ritchie, Joan M 'Housekeeper of Jolimont', *Victorian Historical Journal*, vol. 47, no.1, 1976,, . 277-283

year later. Charlotte died of Phthisis (tuberculosis or consumption), after an illness of two years, having being attended by Dr George Glendinning four days earlier on 4 April. She was buried by clergyman Reverend Robert Goodman of the Church of England. The informant was her grandson, Frédéric Amiet of Leigh Road, now Bannockburn.³

Background to grave restoration in Geelong region

The Geelong Eastern Cemetery was classified by the National Trust in July 1997, and the Geelong Western Cemetery was classified in August 1997. In the same month the Geelong Branch of the National Trust sought permission from the Geelong Cemeteries Trust to conduct night tours during the Heritage Festival in April 1998 to raise funds for grave restoration. The Branch sought the agreement of the Geelong Family History Group which had conducted daytime tours and had researched the lives of many people buried in Geelong regional cemeteries. So began a rewarding cooperative venture between the Geelong Branch of the National Trust and the Geelong Family History Group. The Geelong Cemeteries Monument Restoration Group (GCMRG) was formed as a small sub-group with members from both organisations. The first project on 12 November 1998 was placement of a bronze plaque to mark the first burial in Geelong Western Cemetery of Rosa Harris who died in 1858, aged

9 months. The second, held on 9 August 2003, was unveiling the restored grave of notable Geelong stonemason, Nathaniel Brown, in Geelong Eastern Cemetery. Both projects followed Burra Charter guidelines, retaining as much original material as possible. They complied with the National Trust requirement that restoration should be conducted with the advice of a conservation architect, thus enabling donations to external appeals to be tax deductible.

Geelong Cemeteries Monument Restoration Group - grave of Charlotte Pellet.

In 2003, Joan M Ritchie, a great great grand-daughter of Charlotte Pellet, and a former Senior Lecturer in History in the Department of General Studies at the University of New South Wales, and now living in Germany, wrote to the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) regarding the restoration of the grave. Her enquiry was forwarded to the Geelong Branch.



Charlotte Pellet grave beside the tree in 2003.

With the letter from Joan Ritchie arriving at the time of completion of

³ Death certificate 1877, number 5243.

the second project of the GCMRG, it was appropriate that this restoration should be the third project. With the permission of a family member, the Inverleigh Cemetery Trustees and Golden Plains Shire Planning Department, research about the Pellet grave began. Trust Branch member Ros Lewis corresponded with Joan Ritchie throughout the project.

When the Geelong Cemeteries Monument Restoration Group first looked at the grave, the headstone was leaning slightly backwards and remnants of a timber picket fence and gate were evident. Dr Celestina Sagazio, the National Trust's Senior Historian, visited the Charlotte Pellet grave site with local Trust Branch members and sought advice from a Sydney colleague, Gillian Mitchell, an expert in timbers. After examination of photographs of the Pellet grave timbers, Gillian Mitchell forwarded the following advice:

1. Document existing structure in detail including profile of mouldings, dimensions of timbers and details of construction joints. Record all the details that would enable a new fence to be built to the original dimensions in the future if necessary.
2. Repair and reconstruct using original material where possible. Splice in new timber in damaged areas rather than replacing whole members.

Reset the posts square and level. Do not use concrete to hold them in the ground - tamped soil is sufficient. If rot below ground is a problem consider using PresChem boron rods.

3. Look closely for any sign of an original painted finish. Record if the evidence is there.
4. Ensure the ground levels around the fence are low so that the palings and cross rails are free from the ground and associated water damage. Total decay is eventually inevitable in this situation however with sympathetic repair and reconstruction along with documentation the integrity of the fence can be maintained.⁴

In addition, the GCMRG has been fortunate to have advice in an honorary capacity for this project from two Conservation Architects in Geelong. The first, Lorraine Huddle, B.Arch (Hons) Melb., Member, ICOMOS, Director Lorraine Huddle Pty Ltd, Architectural Historians, Professional Heritage and Design Consultants, attended an on-site inspection and documented the following details about the grave:

⁴ email from Gillian Mitchell to Celestina Sagazio, 9 Dec 2003

Charlotte Pellet's Grave Brief report re site visit, Monday 10 May 2004

1. The grave is wider than most.
2. It measures 2470 by 3007 with a height of about 1100.
3. There is evidence of a picket fence surrounding the grave including a picket gate.
4. The gateway is about 892mm from the outside of each post.
5. The four corner posts (100X100) are still in-situ. The inside post for the gate is also 100 x 100 but it is on the ground.
6. The railings are also in-situ on most sides.
7. One side of the gate is still attached, by hinges, to a corner post.
8. The gate posts are 70 x 70.
9. The original lock is still attached to 6 above.
10. The pickets are 680 wide with 750 spacing between them and were attached to the outside of the railings.
11. There are large numbers of original pickets on the ground and a few still attached to the fence.
12. There are a few pickets on the ground that are longer, thinner, made of a different timber and have a different shape picket head.
13. There appear to have been 16 pickets on the short sides and 19 on the longer sides.
14. There appear to have been about 70 pickets in total.
15. There is evidence of paint on the corner posts but none on the railings and pickets.
16. The top of the posts was deep brown, and the main body and curved incision black.
17. There is evidence of hand made nails in some timbers.
18. There is evidence of a 'gravelly concrete' mixture being placed over the top of the grave, possibly later.
19. There is a small headstone made of Barrabool Stone with a small white marble panel attached. There is evidence that this is not original as there appears to be patching around it.
20. The headstone is on a lean.
21. There is a large Bhutan Pine next to the grave.⁵

There was then some discussion about the dates of the placement of the marble panel on the original Barrabool stone headstone, and the timber fence, as both seemed to be of a later date. Lorraine Huddle consulted Ken Bunn, semi-retired architect/builder, who conducted a site visit. From his observation and knowledge of the timbers, he estimated the existing fence was not older than fifty years. The red gum timber posts had rotted in the ground and they usually take about 50 years to get to that stage. The hard wood rails and pickets could not last longer than 50 years, and this would be one reason why they have fallen off. The observation that the timbers are no older than 50

years may tie in with the 'concrete' layer over the grave which has been poured around the fence posts, either after the posts were in place, or - maybe it was all built at the same time, in the 1950s-1960s.

This raised some questions:

- * Was the grave restored or 'improved' about 50 years ago?

- * If so, did this include the concrete surface, fence, and new marble plaque on the tombstone?

- * Were these works copies of an earlier presentation of the grave, or were they a completely new design?

It was decided to consult the Secretary of the Inverleigh Cemetery Trustees, Sandy (Alexander) McCallum, who advised that the Inverleigh Cemetery books were lost in a 1927 house fire, and an examination of existing books revealed no record of any work being done on the grave since 1927. There is no record of work on the headstone or fence, nor of when concrete was laid. Sandy McCallum was particularly interested in the project as he is related to Charlotte Pellet. Her grand-daughter, Charlotte Sophia Amiet, married Alexander McCallum in 1882 at Murgheboluc.⁶

To investigate the possibility that the unusual picket fence may have been a Swiss custom, Lorraine Huddle, while travelling in Switzerland in June 2004, visited a cemetery near Neuchâtel, about three kilometres from the city centre, and another one about thirty minutes from

Neuchâtel. There was nothing like the picket fence around the Pellet grave site anywhere to be seen. The project came to a standstill for some time at this stage.

To what date should the site be restored?

By the time the project resumed, Lorraine Huddle had moved to Melbourne, and the second architect, Louise Honman, Conservation Architect, B.Arch (Honours) (Deakin University, 1980), Registered Architect ARBV, and Member - ICOMOS Australia, agreed to assist. After discussing all the information and the existing state of the grave, it was decided to restore the grave site including the picket fence, even though it may be of a later date, as the marble panel and the fence were now part of the history of the site. The marble panel was to be retained, and therefore, it seemed reasonable to keep the fence.

The *Geelong Advertiser* records that Charlotte's daughter, Rose Amiet, was buried at Inverleigh cemetery on 10 January 1910, but there is no record of which plot. Perhaps the marble panel had been placed on the Barrabool stone headstone, the grave site widened and the picket fence built when Rose Amiet died in 1910, and she was buried with her mother. There is no record of the specific place where Rose Amiet is buried; however, the family believes she was buried with Charlotte.

⁶ Email from Jennifer Bantow to Lorraine Huddle 13 May 2004

Donations for the restoration project from Joan Ritchie needed to be supplemented to cover anticipated expenses, and the La Trobe Society was approached for assistance. As reported in 'A Word from the Treasurer' in *La Trobeana*, vol. 6, no. 2, July 2007, the La Trobe Society Committee generously advanced an amount to match the existing funds. Paul Jenkinson, Modern Heritage Builders, agreed to undertake the work. Paul took detailed measurements and noted an important detail previously not noticed. The height of the few original pickets still *in situ* showed that the pickets in the centre of the railings were shorter than those at each end, indicating a curved effect along the top of the pickets on each side.



Paul Jenkinson, Modern Heritage Builders, with apprentice Jordan Watts.

Paul completed timber work during 2008 at his home work site and at two on-site visits, donating his own time and charging for the cost of materials and his apprentice's labour only. Ros Lewis, Pam Jennings and Jennifer Bantow completed painting during two on-site visits, with paint generously donated by National

Trust sponsor, Haymes Paints. Bartlett Brothers, through Kevin Bartlett, kindly supplied white granite chips at a reduced price to complete the picture. A plaque recording the restoration, funded by descendants Cheryl Kirchner and David Amiet, is to be located at the foot of the grave and, according to National Trust guidelines, will be placed outside the original grave area.

The restoration of the grave of Charlotte Pellet has been completed over a four-year period which seems a long time. However, this is because of the desire to gather all necessary information, to seek expert advice, to raise the needed funds before starting work, and to engage a sympathetic artisan. The scarce human resources of the volunteer group were at times directed elsewhere.

A gathering will be held on 9 April 2009 at the gravesite to mark the completion of the project.



Painting working bee



Original lock



Completed grave

Jennifer Bantow
President, Geelong and Region
Branch
National Trust of Australia (Victoria)

