



National
Trust



Nature and Art

Reflections of two Victorian gentleman artists

Exhibition catalogue

Ightham Mote, Ivy Hatch, Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 0NT

29 February - 30 October 2016

Introduction



A temporary exhibition highlighting the lives of two 19th century Victorian gentlemen who lived at Ightham Mote. Prideaux John Selby and Charles Joseph La Trobe were both adept artists, with an interest in the world around them.

Prideaux John Selby (1788 – 1867)

From a landowning family in Northumberland, Selby inherited Ightham Mote in 1845. Despite the fact that he planned to give the house to his daughter Marianne rather than live here, he certainly put his heart and soul into making Ightham Mote a comfortable home.

'At the Old Mansion at the Mote, which I have had to pull down and rebuild and restore to an extent I little expected when I first commenced the putting the place into habitable repair' (Prideaux John Selby, 1846). Whilst this might be a bit of an exaggeration, there's no doubt that his love of natural history greatly influenced the structure and character of the gardens - the story of which is told in the stable undercroft.

Selby's most famous publication, 'Illustrations of British Ornithology' (1821-1834), contained the first set of life-sized illustrations of British birds, many of which he drew from specimens in his own collection. In the Dressing Room you will see a 'temporary study' overlooking the garden, which has some of his specimens, as well as two original illustrations.

In 1855, Prideaux and his daughter Marianne leased Ightham Mote to Charles Joseph La Trobe, whose paintings and drawings reflect the house and garden during Prideaux's ownership.

Charles Joseph La Trobe (1801-1875)

His role as the first Lieutenant-Governor of Victoria, Australia, was the last job he held in the British Government. Queen Victoria disapproved of his 'incestuous' marriage to the younger sister of his deceased wife. La Trobe was in love with the English country house, and rented Ightham Mote for a short period of time.

La Trobe was a prolific artist, with 437 paintings and sketches. Seven folios of his work are kept in the State Library of Victoria, Australia. Having sketched as he travelled, many of his pictures were unfinished, often pencil sketches or ones with a sepia wash.

During his time here, he was inspired by the house and its surroundings, and enjoyed spending much of his time painting and drawing. Around the gardens you will see images of La Trobe's works displayed on easels in the locations where he painted them.

Title page picture credits (top, clockwise):

Charles Joseph La Trobe, *S.E. angle of the Mote*, 1856 (Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria, Australia); c.1854 lithograph of Charles Joseph La Trobe, just before his arrival at Ightham Mote (Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria, Australia); 'Red Lobefoot', original hand-coloured copper engraving from Prideaux John Selby's 'Illustrations of British Ornithology' (1821-1834) (Ightham Mote Archives); 1851 lithograph of Prideaux John Selby (The Linnean Society of London).

Garden



Charles Joseph La Trobe (1801-1875)
Spring - behind the Mote, 1856
Pencil and wash
(Courtesy of the Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria, Australia)



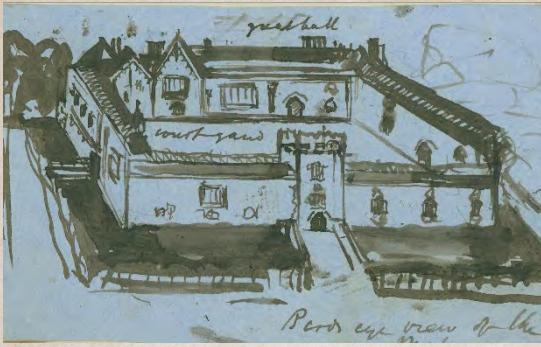
Charles Joseph La Trobe (1801-1875)
S.E. angle of the Mote, 1856
Pencil and wash
(Courtesy of the Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria, Australia)



Charles Joseph La Trobe (1801-1875)
The front of the Mote, 1856
Pencil and wash
(Courtesy of the Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria Australia)



Charles Joseph La Trobe (1801-1875)
The Mote Ightham, S.W. corner showing entrance tower in west front and half timbered south, c.1856
Pencil and wash
(Courtesy of the Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria, Australia)



Charles Joseph La Trobe (1801-1875)
Bird's eye view of the Mote, [1856]
Pencil and wash
(Courtesy of the Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria, Australia)



Charles Joseph La Trobe (1801-1875)
Gateway the Mote, [1856]
Pencil and wash
(Courtesy of the Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria, Australia)



Charles Joseph La Trobe (1801-1875)
Cedars in the garden at the Mote, 1856
Pencil
(Courtesy of the Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria, Australia)

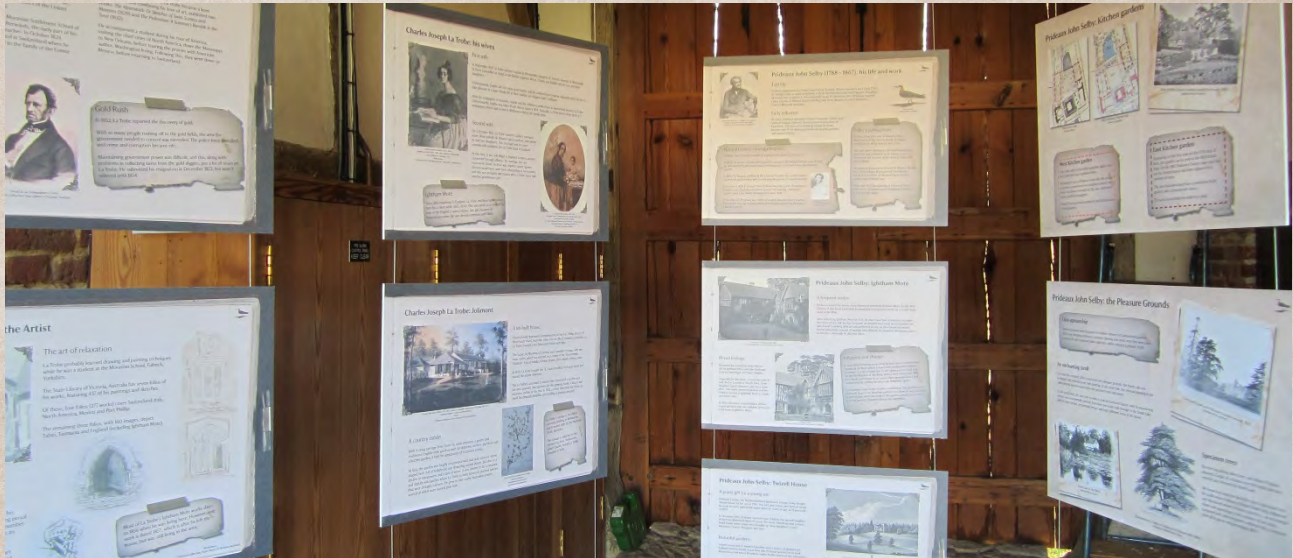


Charles Joseph La Trobe (1801-1875)
The farm buildings. The Mote, 1856
Pencil and wash
(Courtesy of the Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria, Australia)



Charles Joseph La Trobe (1801-1875)
No title. Ightham Mote from the North, c.1856
Pencil and wash
(Courtesy of the Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria, Australia)

Stable undercroft



Information Panels:

Prideaux John Selby - his life and work; Twizell House (Northumberland); and Ightham Mote.
Charles Joseph La Trobe - his life and work; cottage; wives; and the artist.

Garden information panels:

Introduction: changes to the Garden under Selby's ownership and our current sources of evidence. A description of the key changes to the stables, the farm buildings, and the Stable Courtyard (the forecourt).

The North Lawn and West Terrace: details of how the North Lawn changed with the addition of the canal pond silt traps and cascade. There is an 1865 photograph of the grassed terrace to the west of the North Lawn with a contemporary photograph for comparison.

The East Terraces: two old photographs and one contemporary photograph illustrating the changes made, and the similarities, differences, and features which remain today.

The Kitchen Gardens and House Courtyard: details of the developments to the East and West Kitchen Gardens, with an old and contemporary photograph of the East Kitchen Garden. There is also a photograph of the House Courtyard in 1868.

The Pleasure Grounds: how larger areas of the garden were developed in a more ornamental way according to the fashion of the time. Photographs and map extracts help explain the developments around and beyond the North Lake, in the South West gardens, and around the South Lake.

Maps of the Garden: changes between the 1803 Estate Map and the 1869 Ordnance Survey Map, and what we currently know occurred during Selby's ownership.

Courtyard



Charles Joseph La Trobe (1801-1875)
The Gateway. The Mote interior, 1856
Pencil and wash
(Courtesy of the Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria, Australia)



Charles Joseph La Trobe (1801-1875)
No title. N.E. corner of the Courtyard, the Mote, [1856]
Pencil and wash
(Courtesy of the Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria, Australia)



Charles Joseph La Trobe (1801-1875)
Window in Great Hall - the Mote, Feb. 1856
Pencil and wash
(Courtesy of the Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria, Australia)



Charles Joseph La Trobe (1801-1875)
Outer door of Great Hall in Courtyard, [1856]
Pencil and wash
(Courtesy of the Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria, Australia)



Charles Joseph La Trobe (1801-1875)
Doorway of the inhabited part - the Mote, [1856]
Pencil and wash
(Courtesy of the Pictures Collection, State
Library of Victoria, Australia)

Oriel Room - sketchbook



Charles Joseph La Trobe (1801-1875)
The Mote door and window in gateway tower, 1857
Pencil and wash
(Courtesy of the Pictures Collection, State
Library of Victoria, Australia)

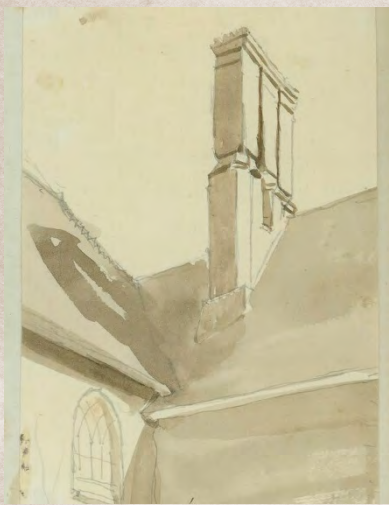
This was probably painted on a return visit from nearby Addington, Kent



Charles Joseph La Trobe (1801-1875)
The Mote - arms in the tower window, [1856]
Pencil and wash
(Courtesy of the Pictures Collection, State
Library of Victoria, Australia)



Charles Joseph La Trobe (1801-1875)
The Mote - interior doorway of gateway tower, 1856
Pencil and wash
(Courtesy of the Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria, Australia)



Charles Joseph La Trobe (1801-1875)
No title. Chimney detail, the Mote, [1856]
Pencil and wash
(Courtesy of the Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria, Australia)



Charles Joseph La Trobe (1801-1875)
Interior. Doorway and window Gateway Tower the Mote, [1856]
Pencil and wash
(Courtesy of the Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria, Australia)



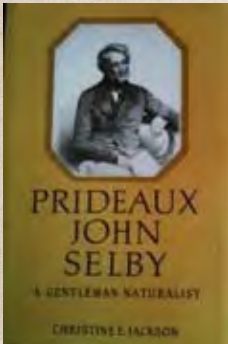
Charles Joseph La Trobe (1801-1875)
Pond. South side of the Mote. Thunderclouds. May, 1856
Watercolour
(Courtesy of the Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria, Australia)

Oriel Room - display cabinet



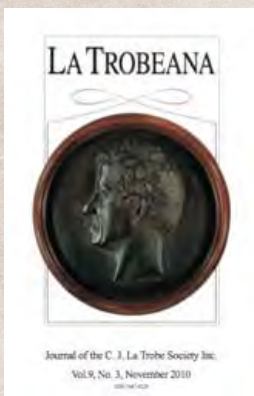
First Edition of Prideaux John Selby's *A History of British Forest-trees, Indigenous and Introduced*. London: John van Voorst (1842).
With nearly 200 superb engravings.

Signed: "For John Thompson Esq. from John van Voorst".
(Courtesy of the Ightham Mote Archives).



Christine E. Jackson. 1992. *Prideaux John Selby. A Gentleman Naturalist*. Stocksfield, Northumberland: The Spredden Press.
A modern biography of Selby.

(Courtesy of the Ightham Mote Archives).



La Trobeana, Journal of The C. J. La Trobe Society Inc. Vol. 9, No. 3, November 2010.

This issue contains the important article: Richard Heathcote, 'Charles Joseph La Trobe and the English Country House', pp.35-39.

"The drawings are dated from January 1856: so it was winter when they settled into the Mote amidst frosty Kentish countryside."

(Courtesy of The C. J. La Trobe Society).



Lieutenant Governor Charles Joseph La Trobe: an exhibition of Books, Prints and Sculptures to celebrate the 10th anniversary of The C. J. La Trobe Society. 2011.

(Curated by John Drury. Courtesy of The C. J. La Trobe Society).

Further reading provided:

The last Selbys of Ightham Mote 1845–1889, article by Pat Straughan.

Charles Joseph La Trobe (1801–1875) an Australian connection to Ightham Mote, article by John Prance.

Charles Henry Robinsons Dressing Room



All specimens registered at the University of Cambridge in 1869, following Selby's death in 1867. Loans and images from the University Museum of Zoology, Cambridge.

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Scaly-breasted Lorikeet

Scientific name: *Trichoglossus chlorolepidotus*

The bird takes its common name from the yellow breast feathers which look like 'scales'.

Habitat: woodlands and timbered areas in eastern Australia, living primarily on the coastal plains.

Food: mainly nectar and pollen, especially from the broad-leaved paperbark tree, but it will also take flowers, berries, and insects.

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Malachite Kingfisher

Scientific name: *Corythornis cristatus*

Habitat: largely resident in Africa south of the Sahara, it is common in reeds by ponds or slow-moving water and nests in a tunnel in sandy banks.

Food: larger fish. Smaller fish, aquatic insects, and crustaceans are just swallowed.

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Ruddy Kingfisher

Scientific name: *Halcyon coromanda*

Habitat: temperate and tropical forests, including tropical rain forests in Asia, from Japan to India. Birds breeding in the northernmost part of the range migrate south for the winter. Living in thick forests, they are more commonly heard than seen.

Food: fish, crustaceans, and insects, but will also eat frogs.

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Ruff

Scientific name: *Philomachus pugnax*

Habitat: a wading bird found in wet meadows and marshes throughout Northern Eurasia.

The male is larger than the female ('Reeve'), and the male's breeding plumage includes the collar of ornamental feathers which inspires its English name.

This specimen is a male; what to modern eyes looks like an upside-down 'female' sign was actually the male sign in the 19th century.



Russet-throated Puffbird

Scientific name: *Hypnelus ruficollis*

Habitat: dry forest and scrub in Colombia and Venezuela, tropical South America. Its nest forms a 'burrow' in an arboreal ('tree-living') termite colony, where it lays three white eggs.

Food: mainly insects, but also takes small lizards, watching and hunting from a perch, and then flying down on to its prey.

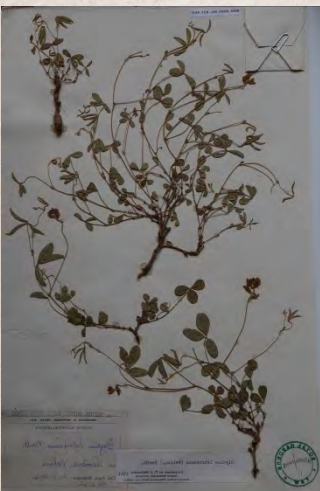
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'Red Lobefoot': original hand-coloured copper engraving from Prideaux John Selby's 'Illustrations of British Ornithology' (1821-1834). 'Red Lobefoot' is the old name for what we now call the Red-necked Phalarope (*Phalaropus lobatus*). Small numbers breed on the Western and Northern Isles of Scotland, and birds are also seen on passage in the autumn, usually along the east coast. (Courtesy of the Ightham Mote Archives).



'Common Redshank, Winter Plumage. Green Sandpiper. Wood Sandpiper': original hand-coloured copper engraving from Prideaux John Selby's 'Illustrations of British Ornithology' (1821-1834). The Redshank (*Tringa totanus*), the Green Sandpiper (*Tringa ochropus*), and the Wood Sandpiper (*Tringa glareola*) are waders. In Britain, the Wood Sandpiper is a passage migrant in spring and autumn; a few pairs breed in the Scottish Highlands. The greatest concentrations of breeding Redshanks are in parts of Scotland and north-west England, while the Green Sandpiper is largely confined to England and Wales. (Courtesy of the Ightham Mote Archives).



19th century herbarium sheet of Clover Glycine or the Australian Anchor Plant, *Glycine latrobeana*, named after Charles Joseph La Trobe, who was a keen amateur botanist. This is a perennial herb endemic to south-eastern Australia. A herbarium specimen is a dried and pressed plant mounted onto a herbarium sheet and preserved in a herbarium for botanical and taxonomic research purposes. (Loan from the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew).

For the specimen collected by La Trobe in 1841:

www.foltc.latrobesociety.org.au/documents/Garden_Glycine.pdf



Exhibition working group

National Trust / Ightham Mote staff, with volunteers Sharon Gilbert, Philip Stott, and Pat Straughan. Picture research by Jo Carlill.



Acknowledgments

Ightham Mote and the exhibition working group would like to express their gratitude to the following without whose help this exhibition would not have been possible.

- ✿ Dr Michael Brooke, Strickland Curator of Ornithology, Department of Zoology University of Cambridge, and Matt Lowe, Collections Manager, University Museum of Zoology, Cambridge
- ✿ Lynda Brooks, Librarian and Linnaeus Link Co-ordinator, The Linnean Society of London
- ✿ Eric Epps
- ✿ Gerard Hayes, Librarian, Picture Collection, Collection Development & Discovery, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia
- ✿ Dr Alan Paton, Head of Science (Collections), Science Directorate, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew
- ✿ Dr Dianne Reilly, Secretary of The C. J. La Trobe Society Inc., Melbourne, Australia
- ✿ The Volunteer Team at Scotney Castle Carpenters
- ✿ Tunbridge Wells Museum & Art Gallery

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