

LA TROBE BOOKS

BOOKS LAUNCHED DURING THE YEAR OF LA TROBE

Making of a Governor



The study of La Trobe by author Dr Dianne Reilly was launched by Professor Peter McPhee, Deputy Vice Chancellor of the University of Melbourne on the 205th anniversary of La Trobe's birth on 20 March, 2006.

Pictured at the launch are (from left) Professor McPhee, Dr Reilly and Trust CEO Stephen Hare.

La Trobe was Superintendent of the Port Phillip District of New South Wales from 1839 to 1851, and Lieutenant-Governor of Victoria from 1851 until his departure in 1854.

He pioneered, mostly on horseback, a route into Gippsland; he personally blazed a trail to Cape Otway after two failed attempts, and had the vital landfall lighthouse erected there; he undertook 94 extensive journeys around Victoria so that he could truly understand the territory he had been sent to administer.

On these trips, as he had on appointments in other countries, he painted much of the scenery, and many of these paintings were part of the National Trust's touring exhibition.

However, La Trobe was not universally popular with the settlers in the Port Phillip District. His manner could be paternalistic and he was reserved; the colonists did not appreciate why separation from New South Wales took so long; the miners certainly did not appreciate the licence fee he imposed; and his superiors did not appreciate his ways of dealing with the challenges he faced as the population mushroomed during the goldrush.

La Trobe departed from Australia in May 1854 after long and arduous service, having just received advice that his wife had died. He soon married again to Rose de Meuron, his deceased wife's sister. Due to the illegality of such a marriage in Britain, he was not considered for any other Colonial Office postings. In fact, it was more than ten years before he was awarded a small pension.

Dr Dianne Reilly, *La Trobe: The Making of a Governor*, Melbourne University Publishing, \$49.95, 308 pp, softcover. Copies are for sale at La Trobe's Cottage. [Flier](#)

La Trobe's garden



Nestled on a rise near the Royal Botanic Gardens and the Shrine is perhaps Melbourne's oldest building and the state's first Government House, the National Trust owned La Trobe's Cottage.

Brought to Port Phillip by Superintendent Charles Joseph La Trobe in 1839, the cottage was originally located on a 12½ acre estate across the river at Jolimont.

The book, *La Trobe's Jolimont. A walk round my garden* by Helen Botham, published in 2006, describes the extensive garden which La Trobe developed during the 15 years he spent in Victoria. He arrived with melancholy memories of the beautiful gardens of Europe, and with a passion to recreate these in his new, uncouth, uncultured environment.

Early paintings of Jolimont show just how successful he was – many like-minded gardeners in this far colony provided him with seeds of the plants of home.

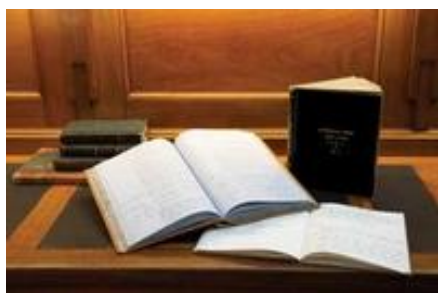
A survey of the Jolimont Estate carried out in 1853, now held in the Pictures Collection at the State Library of Victoria, shows the extent of the walks and beds that La Trobe had originally set out.

As La Trobe moved about the colony, he began to appreciate the beauty of the native flora, and the sense in cultivating these and Mediterranean type plants, so much more suited to our climate. The plants sent to him from other gardeners and from the Botanic Gardens in Sydney reflect his new interest in growing plants more suited to a Mediterranean climate.

The 22 drawings produced by his cousin Edward La Trobe Bateman in 1853, also part of the State Library Pictures Collection, show in beautiful detail how the previously well-tended European style garden had become a haven of Mediterranean and Australian native plants.

Helen Botham, *La Trobe's Jolimont. A walk round my garden*, C J La Trobe Society and Australian Garden History Society, 56 pp, softcover, \$29.95, Trust and Society members \$24.95. Copies are for sale at La Trobe's Cottage. [Flier](#)

Revealing Diaries



La Trobe's daily diaries – *Australian Notes, 1839-1854* was also published in 2006.

The State Library of Victoria had acquired most of La Trobe's daily diaries which cover his 15 years of governance in the Port Phillip Colony and the State of Victoria from 1851. La Trobe meticulously kept separate diaries to record daily appointments, excursions and special interests.

Australian Notes was published by Tarcoola Press with Robert Blackmore's Boz Publishing, and with much help from the Historical Societies, the La Trobe Society, the Royal Historical Society of Victoria and many others.

Charles Joseph La Trobe, Australian Notes: 1839-1854, Tarcoola Press, 396pp., hardback. Printer's edition \$250. [Flier](#)

Swiss Link to Wine



Author Raymond Henderson, a distant relative of La Trobe's wife, Sophie de Montmollin, traces the story of the Yarra Valley wine industry. From the arrival of six of Sophie's compatriots, he tells the story of these Swiss vigneron whose legacy is today's thriving industry.

Raymond Henderson, *From Jolimont to Yering, Swiss Bachelor Vignerons, Romancing the Yarra Valley 1830-2000*, Roundabout Publishing, 428 pp, hardback. Limited first edition. Out of print.

Exhibition Catalogue



A Sketcher of No Mean Pretensions: Charles Joseph La Trobe, the Governor and the Artist, compiled by Elizabeth Mitford, with an introduction by Dr Dianne Reilly, National Trust of Australia (Victoria), 24pp, softcover. Copies are for sale at La Trobe's Cottage, price \$5.

[National Trust of Australia \(Victoria\)](#) 2006 – updated and archived by the C J La Trobe Society 2012.