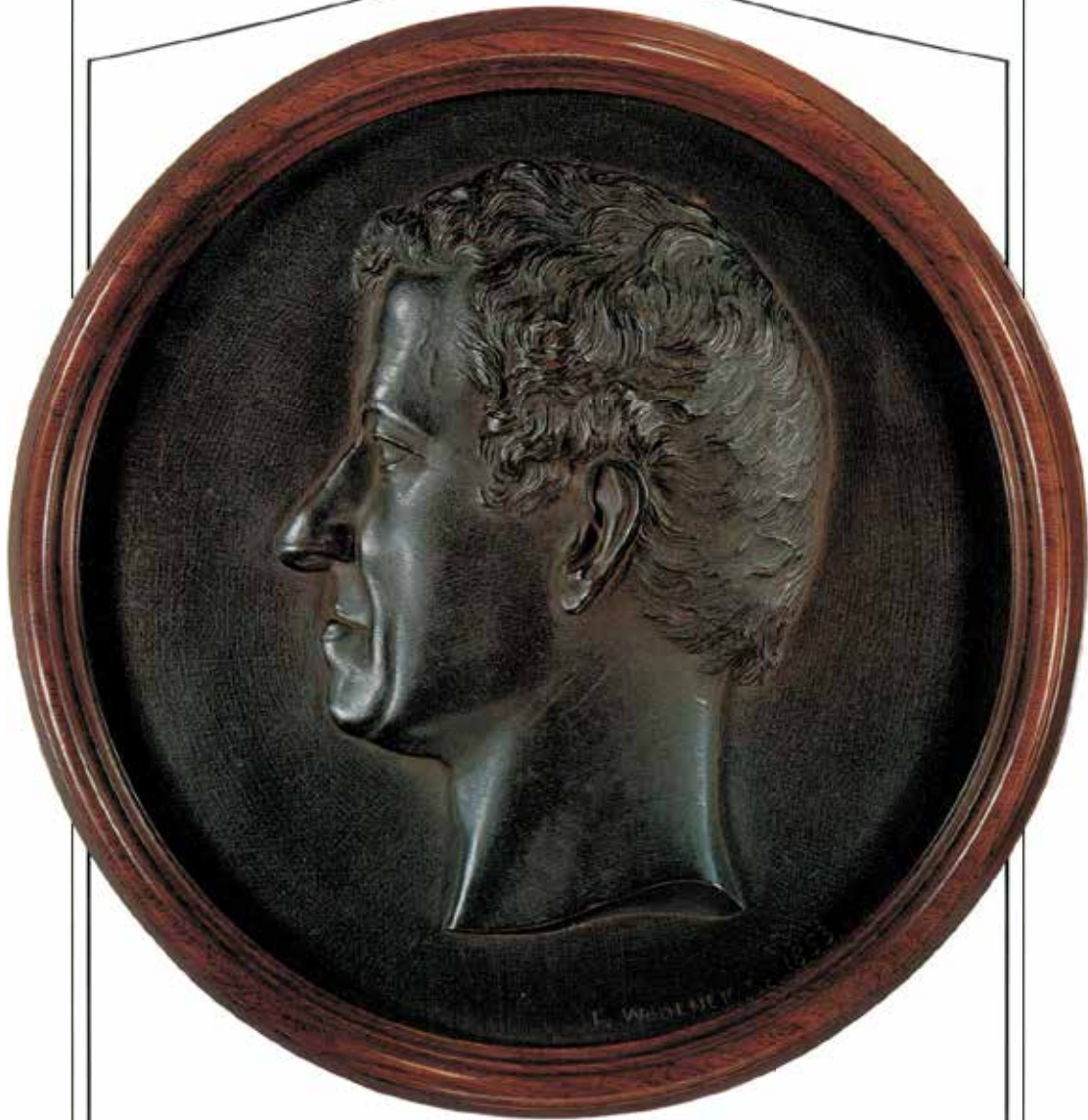


# LA TROBEANA



**Journal of the C. J. La Trobe Society Inc.  
10th Anniversary 2001-2011**

**Vol.10, No. 2, June 2011**

ISSN 1447-4026

The C J La Trobe Society Inc was formed in 2001 to promote understanding and appreciation of the life, work and times of Charles Joseph La Trobe, Victoria's first Lieutenant-Governor.  
[www.latrobesociety.org.au](http://www.latrobesociety.org.au)

La Trobeana  
is kindly sponsored by  
Mr Peter Lovell

**LOVELL CHEN**  
ARCHITECTS & HERITAGE CONSULTANTS

## *La Trobeana*

Journal of the C J La Trobe Society Inc.  
Vol.10, No. 2, June 2011

**Honorary Editor:** Loreen Chambers

ISSN 1447-4026

### **Editorial Committee**

Mrs Loreen Chambers, Editor  
Dr Dianne Reilly  
Ms Robyn Riddett

### **Designed by**

Michael Owen [michaelowen.mto@gmail.com](mailto:michaelowen.mto@gmail.com)

Selected articles in La Trobeana are refereed.

### **Contributions and subscription enquiries**

The Honorary Secretary: Dr Dianne Reilly  
The La Trobe Society  
PO Box 65  
Port Melbourne, Vic 3207  
Phone: 9646 2112  
Email: [dmreilly@optusnet.com.au](mailto:dmreilly@optusnet.com.au)

### **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 l.l.: T. Woolner.  
Sc. 1853:/M  
La Trobe, Charles Joseph, 1801 – 1875. Accessioned 1894  
La Trobe Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria.

[www.latrobesociety.org.au](http://www.latrobesociety.org.au)

# Contents

---

**5** Introduction

## Articles

**7** David Dunstan  
*Charles and Sophie La Trobe and the  
Vignerons: the birth of an industry in  
nineteenth century Victoria*

**19** Dianne Reilly  
*Brian La Trobe: a modern day La Trobe*

**21** Brian La Trobe  
*The Visit of Christian Ignatius La Trobe  
to South Africa in 1815*

## 26 Illustrations

**31** Fay Woodhouse  
*A most companionable and lively man:  
Christian Ignatius La Trobe  
(1758-1836)*

**35** Tim Hogan  
*Resplendent Lights of Publicity and  
Despicable Journals: the early newspapers  
of the Port Phillip District*

**41** Fay Woodhouse  
*Winemaking in central Victoria:  
the pre-history of Tahbilk*

## Reports and Notices

**46** Helen Armstrong  
*Charles La Trobe's sketch of Chicago:  
a research report*

**48** Friends of La Trobe's Cottage

**49** Forthcoming events 2011

**50** Contributions welcome



# Introduction

---

## Vice-regal Patronage

The Governor of Victoria, the Honourable Alex Chernov, AO, QC, has kindly agreed to give his patronage to the La Trobe Society during his term of office.

He has requested that the executive officers should keep him informed of the main activities of the Society from time to time. As has been the case with previous Governors, copies of *La Trobeana* will be forwarded to the Governor as they are published, and we hope that he and Mrs Chernov may attend future functions as their busy schedules permit.

Members will be pleased to know that La Trobe Society letterhead now features the current Governor's patronage of our Society.

We are delighted that the Governor has kindly agreed to follow in the footsteps of four of his predecessors by becoming Patron of the La Trobe Society.

---

## From the President

The La Trobe Society has commenced its tenth year with an excellent program of activities.

I was delighted to meet Brian La Trobe at his most interesting lecture to our Society in March which was held at The Lyceum Club. It was fascinating to hear him discuss Christian Ignatius La Trobe's experiences and travel in South Africa in the early years of the nineteenth century. Brian illustrated his talk with the most amazing collection of superb drawings and paintings by Christian Ignatius which provided us with some important insights into his pioneering travel in South Africa. I could not help but reflect on the similarities with Charles La Trobe's life here in Victoria. What a family!

As always the articles in *La Trobeana* provide us with a rich and varied content. The articles reflect the vibrancy and diversity of this new settler society emerging at the then end of the world. Our own society today is undergoing enormous changes at a rate that can leave us breathless. I am sure those people who arrived with La Trobe in Victoria 1839 were equally amazed when they reflected on the cosmopolitan city that had emerged over the first twenty years of settlement and wondered at the enormity of the changes they had witnessed.

**Diane Gardiner**

*Hon. President La Trobe Society*



# Charles and Sophie La Trobe and the Vignerons: the birth of an industry in nineteenth century Victoria.

By Dr David Dunstan

---

**Dr David Dunstan is a Senior Lecturer with the National Centre for Australian Studies at Monash University. He is an historian and researcher with many books and published essays to his credit, including several titles about the wine industry in Australia. Among these are: *Better than Pommard! A History of Wine in Victoria* (1994), *Wine from the Hills* (2000), and *Morris of Rutherglen* (2009). He has taught Australian Studies and Australian History at the University of Melbourne, and at Deakin, RMIT and Monash Universities. David is currently working on a long term project on the history of the Melbourne *Herald* newspaper, and Australian journalists, columnists, correspondents and cartoonists at home and abroad.**

*This refereed article reproduces in print his 2011 AGL Shaw Lecture to a joint meeting of the La Trobe Society and the Royal Historical Society of Victoria.*

Since the early 1840s the Port Phillip District of New South Wales boasted a handful of agriculturists from Continental Europe who were knowledgeable about viticulture and wine making. These were acquaintances and country folk of Madame Sophie La Trobe, the Swiss born wife of the first Superintendent of Port Phillip and later Lieutenant Governor of Victoria, Charles La Trobe, who arrived in 1839. It has been suggested that the La Trobes never actively solicited the migration to Victoria of Swiss wine makers.<sup>1</sup> But their presence at Port Phillip was a factor in early individual decisions to emigrate and, in turn, it seems they both inspired and may have encouraged others. The La Trobes knew and may have visited and received some of these vignerons personally. Certainly, Port Phillip was better known in Switzerland as a consequence of the La Trobes coming here. A pattern of chain migration resulted and Victoria

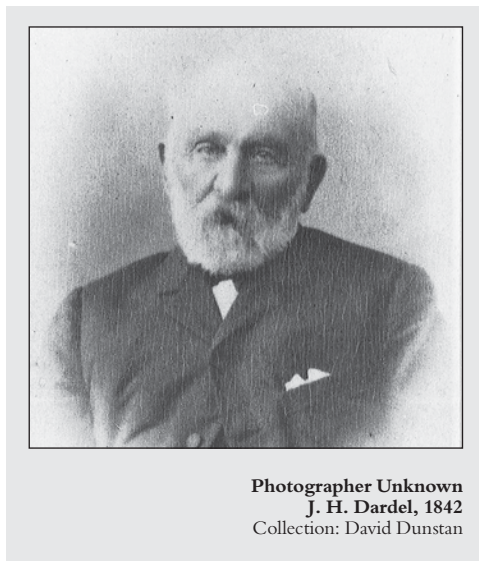
attracted the largest number of Swiss migrants of all the Australian colonies during the nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup> They may also be held responsible for kick starting a grape growing and wine making industry in colonial Victoria.

The 1830s and 1840s had been pioneering and productive years for viticulture and wine making in New South Wales, although the actual growth of the industry was not great compared with pastoral activity and other forms of agriculture. Men like James Busby and William and James Macarthur introduced extensive and well-documented collections of the best European vine stock. The first generation of wine-producing vineyards had grown to maturity in and around Sydney, the Lower Hunter River and at Camden.<sup>3</sup> At the Macarthur family seat at Camden, William Macarthur experimented with grape varieties and established a vineyard and winery. The

Macarthur family are well known for their role in the development of the Australian wool industry but the second generation was also innovative in agriculture and in grape growing and wine making. William was the author of a widely consulted early primer on the subject, his *Letters on the Culture of the Vine, Fermentation, and the Management of Wine in the Cellar* of 1844.<sup>4</sup> One of the principal Swiss-born vigneron of Victoria in the nineteenth century, Hubert de Castella, credits him as having another indirect influence as well.<sup>5</sup> Whilst in Europe on tour with their father, James and William Macarthur were, in 1815, placed in a school at Vevey,

small community, such as Neuchâtel was fifty years ago, the departure for the antipodes of a lady belonging to one of the oldest and richest families of the town, created a sensation'.<sup>9</sup>

It was through the La Trobe and de Montmollin influence, either directly or indirectly, that the first Swiss vigneron, the Belperroud brothers and James Henry Dardel came to Port Phillip. The brothers Alexandre (1804-1875) and Jean Belperroud (1801-1883) were skilled wine growers from Cornaux near Neuchâtel as was James Henry Dardel (1808-1903) who travelled with them.<sup>10</sup> Neuchâtel Canton is well-known for its wines, which are grown along the shores of Lake Neuchâtel. These three, in turn, encouraged the emigration of additional vigneron and vine dressers from Neuchâtel and the neighbouring western Swiss cantons of Vaud, Fribourg and Berne and as French-speaking Swiss paved the way for Burgundian and Swiss vine growing and wine making practices to be introduced to the new land.<sup>11</sup> The Belperrouds had arrived initially in Sydney in 1839, after service in the Austrian Cavalry, as fully paid-up migrants. Possibly, they were motivated by Louis de Pourtalès stories of Macarthur family experiences. By January 1840, they were in Melbourne. The adventurous Dardel had travelled to Port Jackson on an earlier voyage in 1836. He arrived again in Melbourne in February, 1840, on the barque *Caroline*. Naturally, the three men called on the La Trobes. Charles La Trobe confirmed this soon after their arrival in 1840, when he wrote to James Macarthur:



Photographer Unknown  
J. H. Dardel, 1842  
Collection: David Dunstan

Switzerland 'amidst the vines that cover the fair slopes of the Lake of Geneva'. There the young men met and became acquainted with a young aristocrat, Count Louis de Pourtalès, who, as a consequence, became one of 'the few on the Continent' possessing 'any special knowledge of the New Holland of these days'.<sup>6</sup> Later, in 1839, when de Pourtalès' relative Sophie la Trobe (née de Montmollin) was faced with the prospect of removal to far-distant Port Phillip as the Superintendent, Charles La Trobe's wife, the Count would have been able to offer some reassuring knowledge of Australian conditions and contact with mutual friends such as the Macarthurs. But the link between Switzerland and Australia was even stronger than this. Charles La Trobe had at one stage himself been a tutor to de Pourtalès' family and through this connection had met his future wife.<sup>7</sup> This network of personal influence extending from the Macarthur family to the La Trobes was to have a seminal influence on the birth of viticulture and wine making in Victoria.<sup>8</sup> Hubert de Castella, a prominent nineteenth century Victorian vigneron and himself a Swiss immigrant of 1854, later recalled that 'in a

Some months ago three of the good Neuchâtelois, seduced by the knowledge that we were here (Neuchâtel is Mrs La Trobe's native town) came out to cultivate the vine here, with the purpose of engaging a large number of their fellows to follow in case they found the prospects favourable. The country and climate they find everything they could wish but the enormous price of land has taken them quite aback – They had only brought out hundreds & it requires thousands. You know I have no power. They are still undecided what to do – but I hope to get them the rent of a government reserve or some other advantage to engage them to persevere. They are of a superior class & are unwilling to throw away their labour upon what is not their own.<sup>12</sup>



Charles La Trobe could well understand their situation. Although placed in a position of authority, he had been provided with neither house nor land by the Colonial Office or the New South Wales government. His salary, too, was less than what he came to regard as necessary to discharge his office which, although subordinate to Sydney colonial authority, came to assume an importance in its own right. Melbourne and Port Phillip generally became an important centre of settlement controlling an extensive hinterland. Eventually its claims to a measure of autonomy succeeded and separation from New South Wales was achieved in 1850 some three years before La Trobe relinquished the office of Lieutenant Governor to return to England. Not having an official Government House as residence, he could hardly be expected to provide the hospitality later governors regarded as a duty and a pleasure of office. Yet common humanity dictated what he would do for personal acquaintances, kin and country folk, including we may surmise those of his wife. La Trobe indicated this in a letter of 1840 to his publisher friend, John Murray: 'Persons arriving in the Colony with letters from any dear friend, I welcome with all my heart, and show them every attention in my power; while to gentlemen who arrive with lithographed letters of recommendation from the Colonial office, pronouncing their eulogy in set phrase and form, I show them the door'.<sup>13</sup>

Fortunately, for the vigneron of 1840 contract work was available in the gardens and properties of the well-to-do. Their first effort was a one acre vineyard just above the confluence of the Plenty river with the Yarra at Yallambie, the property of John and Robert Bakewell.<sup>14</sup> After this, in 1841-42, La Trobe encouraged them to go to the Barwon river area where, with cuttings from Macarthur at Camden, the Belperrouds commenced the Berramongo vineyard at Dewings Ford on land part of Edward Willis and Charles Swanston's Merrawarp estate. Charles Swanston was the prominent pioneer banker, merchant and leading member of the Port Phillip Association. The Association's claims to Melbourne land had been disallowed. But the Association had acquired 9500 acres of agricultural land in the Geelong region at auction in Sydney. Swanston and the Edinburgh merchant, George Duncan Mercer, were the Association's last shareholders at this stage. Much of this land was leased out to smallholders on allotments of one hundred acres and less, some of this to Swiss vigneron. Together with his son-in-law, Edward Willis, Swanston had started in trade as an import and investment agent and Geelong based general merchant and wool broker in 1844. Swanston's own troubled larger enterprise, the

Derwent Bank, failed in 1849. He died in 1850 whereupon his son, Charles Lambert Swanston, took over the Swanston & Willis interest and the management of the Geelong asset but had probably been involved before this.<sup>15</sup>

Swiss settlers first established small vineyards in the vicinity of Geelong in the 1840s. Among them, Jean (later John) Belperroud, David Louis Pettavel, Frederick Brequet (or Breguet) and James Henry Dardel emerged as the most successful of the district's early vigneron. According to the historian W.R. Brownhill, 'at Wauron Ponds, the Barrabool Hills, along the valleys of the Barwon and Moorabool rivers, and in other areas, the combined vineyards and orchards presented a wonderful scene of cultivation and industry'.<sup>16</sup> Among the first of any consequence was the Berramongo Vineyard 'on the river Barwon some nine miles from Geelong between the Fyansford and Barrabool Hills roads'. This vineyard planted to 'Sweetwater' vines in 1841 by Jean 'John' Belperroud was, in 1867, proclaimed the oldest in Victoria and described as located on 'a fine site' on 'a gently undulating slope of the Barrabools rising from the Barwon to a considerable height and facing the rising sun'.<sup>17</sup> With its north and eastern aspect the vineyard received sun in the morning and afternoon. Its different soils produced grapes good for both fruit and wine; the latter described as 'a light dry wine, similar to the French Sauterne,' meaning a dry white Bordeaux style wine rather than the exotic sweet one.<sup>18</sup> The vineyard was on land leased from Swanston and Willis and regarded as a prize by them. Both John Belperroud and his brother Alex were involved, with John the more important of the two and Alex acquiring other interests later. By 1856 the Berramongo Vineyard was the largest in Victoria with 150,000 vines on fifty acres.<sup>19</sup> By this stage interest in viticulture in the Geelong district was spreading. In 1858 the influential Geelong and Western District Agricultural and Horticultural Society offered prizes of 150 guineas for two 'Concise and Practical Treatises on the Cultivation of the Vine in Victoria'. The winners were the pioneers Belperroud and Pettavel and in 1859 these essays were published and they sparked a wider debate among would be authorities on viticulture in the new land.<sup>20</sup> In 1859 when the lease was renewed John Belperroud took Samuel Perottet as a partner. He sold his interest in Berramongo when he became insolvent in 1861.<sup>21</sup>

Another early vineyard was the 'Neuchâtel Vineyard' planted in 1842 at 'Pollock's Ford' by David Louis Pettavel and Frederick Brequet, and named after the Swiss canton from which both men came. Contemporary opinion credits Brequet as being the first to plant a vineyard

dedicated solely to wine making.<sup>22</sup> Most early vineyards had a dual function. Grapes could be consumed fresh as fruit or made into wine, although it seems that a good deal of the early produce of these vineyards was consumed as fruit. Much depended on the varieties planted. One of these was the white grape, Chasselas, that performed the dual function well. It was, and remains, a variety associated with their homeland, Switzerland. In February 1847, Brequet and Pettavel were contemplating the manufacture of some 2000 gallons of wine from their four year-old vineyard, 'independently of having a plentiful supply of grapes for the market'.<sup>23</sup> The Neuchâtel Vineyard was about ten miles from Geelong on the Barwon River on ten acres of elevated land leased from William Clark Haines and his partner, John Highett. Haines was subsequently a prominent civil servant and, in 1857, leader of the first Victorian Government. This system of patronage and leasehold on the part of Swiss agriculturists seems to have been prevalent in the 1840s as the immigrants sought to establish themselves, but they soon accrued landed assets in their own right. Pettavel had arrived in Port Phillip in 1841 on the same ship as Haines, the *Platina*.<sup>24</sup> Cuttings had been brought from Dijon for Brequet – of the quality red varieties, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier – and in 1845 the two men made their first wine. The Neuchâtel vineyard ranks with those at Yering and Yan Yean and Berramongo as among Victoria's first wine-producing vineyards. Charles La Trobe wrote to his superior Sir George Gipps in October, 1845, seeking their naturalization 'as Englishmen' and informing him that they had formed 'an excellent vineyard & intend to make their first attempt at wine this year'. In January 1846, it was described as having 20,000 vines 'in vigorous health'.<sup>25</sup> By 1861 Frederick Brequet was a wealthy man. He had four men at his vineyard and was complaining at 'the dearness of labor, and the independence of many of the men he is compelled to hire'.<sup>26</sup>

The Geelong vineyards prospered. James Dardel started planting the first of his four Paradise vineyards in 1842, which in time would total 45 acres. This was a vineyard of six acres on land leased from Dr John Learmonth at Batesford, a small hamlet on the Moorabool River about six miles from Geelong. It was described in 1859 as 'a model by reason of its aspect, which is facing the rising sun, and sheltered from the cold westerly winds; its site, a gentle slope; and its soil a light deep and warm reddish sandy loam'.<sup>27</sup> Subsequent 'Paradise' vineyards were established on his own freehold land. Dardel was planting his third Paradise vineyard by 1846, the largest of which grew to twenty acres.<sup>28</sup> The visiting journalist, Ebenezer

Ward, in 1864, identified this by reference to the railway viaduct which still spans the Moorabool: 'any observant traveller who has crossed the viaduct by daylight can hardly have failed to notice a large breadth of vines, on a hill-side, rising gently from the river's flat, westward of the railway'.<sup>29</sup>

James Henry Dardel was a key figure in the development of Victorian viticulture and so also by association was Charles La Trobe. Raymond Henderson claims that La Trobe introduced Dardel to the pioneer squatter, Donald Ryrie of Yering, whose vigneron and wine maker he then became. La Trobe visited 'Mr Ryrie' and his station 'Yarra Yarra Yering' over three days from 16 to 19 March 1840 making mention in his notes of the garden there.<sup>30</sup> The three Ryrie brothers – Donald, William and James – had been among the leading overlanders who drove cattle and sheep from New South Wales to Port Phillip in the 1830s. They were also members of the Melbourne Club where Charles La Trobe would have met them. James was a founding member.<sup>31</sup> Squatters moved about on their vast leasehold properties, which often made cultivation of their gardens difficult. Donald Ryrie was the 'stayer' at Yering, the one who established the cattle and sheep runs and who maintained the homestead, garden and, we may presume, the vineyard.<sup>32</sup> In addition to assisting the Belperroud brothers at the Plenty property, the peripatetic Dardel worked for ex-Sydney magistrate William Verner on his home Banyule at Heidelberg, and in 1845–48 managed the Port Phillip Winery Company's vines at Brighton, while all the time establishing his own vineyards and orchards at Batesford on the Moorabool River outside Geelong.<sup>33</sup> An 1847 reference from Charles La Trobe – Dardel was then visiting Tasmania for the purpose of obtaining garden stocks – indicates the basis of their relationship: 'He is a very steady hard working man & as a native of Mrs La Trobe's canton we feel an interest in him'.<sup>34</sup> By 1866 Dardel was credited with having personally planted 135 acres of Victorian vineyards and was a friend of the German-born botanist and creator of the Melbourne Botanic Gardens, Ferdinand von Mueller.<sup>35</sup> In 1861 he was chosen as one of the judges of the Argus gold cup, offered by the newspaper for the best cultivated vineyard, and awarded to Messrs de Castella and Anderson at Yering.<sup>36</sup>

A premium was established early for specialised and exotic agricultural skills. This would continue throughout the nineteenth century as colonists sought to extend agriculture beyond the narrow confines of wheat and wool. They looked to Mediterranean Europe and climates and terrain more like those of Victoria,



Photographer Unknown  
David Louis Pettavel  
Collection: David Dunstan

rather than the colder regimes of the British Isles from whence most colonists had come. The challenge lay in encouraging the agricultural practices of people and lands unfamiliar to them. It was with this in mind that early practitioners such as Busby, Macarthur and the Surveyor-General of New South Wales, Sir Thomas Mitchell, had committed themselves to print on the subject.<sup>37</sup> But many considered the best means of obtaining the skills and knowledge necessary was to encourage those who possessed them to emigrate. Here the La Trobes came to mind. In 1847 James Macarthur, in a letter to the colonial civil servant F.L.S. Merewether, commented on the planned introduction of German vinedressers into New South Wales:

A supply of skilled labour of a similar kind, and in some respects perhaps better suited to this Colony, may I am assured, be obtained from the Swiss Cantons, more especially from the Pays de Vaud and Neuchâtel. Mr La Trobe can, I have no doubt, afford valuable information in this respect, and would have it in his power greatly to facilitate any plan

that might be devised for introducing Emigrants from those countries.<sup>38</sup>

Charles Lambert Swanston visited Neuchâtel about this time and he recruited eight vinedressers to come to Victoria. Swanston maintained that the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners had assured him the passage money (£23 per person) would be reimbursed. In this case the authorities declined to pay, owing to the regulations not having been satisfactorily complied with. Nevertheless, the Swiss immigrants were allowed to stay.<sup>39</sup> Money, not people, was at issue in this case. In July 1849, Charles La Trobe was still seeking information. He had received 'certificates of character' issued by the Canton of Neuchâtel and, three weeks later, he was seeking from Swanston, Willis & Co. details of Certificates of Occupation. Had officialdom lost the paperwork?<sup>40</sup> What is in evidence is that by 1848 an informal network that favoured both continued Swiss emigration and the development of viticulture was in existence. Also, that Charles La Trobe was a reference point.

David Pettavel was one Swiss immigrant who had aspirations to be a vine grower on a grand scale. In 1848 he purchased 585 acres of land. He must have done well out of the Neuchâtel Vineyard to be able to afford such a large holding.<sup>41</sup> In the same year Pettavel established his Victoria Vineyard on a typical Barrabool hill slope with a northerly aspect. This was about a mile from the Colac road and eight miles from Geelong. Although its grapes ripened late and the vineyard suffered through exposure to wind, it was described in 1859, as giving 'pretty good red wine'.<sup>42</sup> By 1861 it had about twenty acres of vines. Here Pettavel built a substantial cottage complete with an extensive cellar made from yellow Barrabool sandstone. Brequet and Pettavel were both enterprising men. Brequet established his Suisse Vineyard in 1855 and had other vineyard interests at Belmont. Pettavel claimed that but for the shortage of labour he would have had 200 acres under vine. The gold rushes presented men like Pettavel and Brequet with a paradox: excessive demand for the produce of their vineyards and orchards and no labour to help them do the work to make the money. In response they turned, not unsurprisingly, to their own countrymen. In 1854 Brequet organised the migration of about fifty Swiss to assist in vine cultivation, while Pettavel assisted the migration of relatives and their friends.<sup>43</sup> Throughout the 1850s the Swiss extended their vineyards beyond the initial areas through an intricate pattern of leasehold, sub-leasehold and freehold acquisition in the case of the more senior and established vigneron.

In 1857 the Swiss consul, Achille Bischoff, estimated that some 1500 Swiss from the French-speaking cantons of Neuchâtel and Vaud were working as vigneron in the area around Geelong.<sup>44</sup> Unlike many other wine makers who named their vineyards after places associated with their homelands, Pettavel demonstrated his loyalty by naming two of his vineyards after the reigning British monarch and her consort, Victoria and Prince Albert. By the late 1850s and early 1860s, the interest in vineyards and wine making had extended to the mainstream culture with evidence of English, Irish and Scottish names and enthusiasm on the part of landholders and capitalists supporting vineyard ventures.<sup>45</sup>

this – together with Dardel’s husbandry – may be where the vineyard’s orientation to wine came in, probably some time after 1838. Macarthur himself identified ‘the little black cluster’ or Pineau as a grape of his, which strengthens the case for it being Pinot Noir, the great red grape of Burgundy.<sup>48</sup> Sweetwater is a synonym for Chasselas, the best known Swiss white variety and extensively planted in the Geelong district. The first wine was made in March 1845. In August of the same year another 296 cuttings were planted out. The wines made were ‘a red wine resembling Burgundy, and a white wine resembling Sauterne and both very good. Dardel, a Swiss (afterwards at Geelong), used to come to prune the vines. He also put us in the



S. T. Gill, 1818-1880, artist  
J. Tingle, engraver  
On the Barwon River near Fyan's Ford, Geelong  
Melbourne, Sands and Kenny, 1857

James Henry Dardel’s association with the Ryrie brothers at Yering marks him out as a seminal figure. His influence extended beyond the Geelong hinterland districts where he established his main holdings. Although Dardel may not have planted the wine vineyard, subsequently known as Victoria’s first, in 1838, he maintained it, probably added crucial vine stock and made the wine that established it as such. He would visit twice a year – once to ‘dress’ or prune the vines, and once to make the wine.<sup>46</sup> The vines planted at Yering were remembered as the Black Cluster or Hamburg and a white grape the Sweetwater.<sup>47</sup> Black Cluster was a synonym for the noble wine grape Pinot Noir, although ‘Hamburg’ was certainly not. This was probably Black Hamburg or Trollinger (Schiava Grossa), a later ripening variety known for its large, sweet and juicy dark berries. Undoubtedly, these were intended initially to provide fresh fruit. Later, the Ryries had some additional stock sent to them from William Macarthur’s vineyard at Camden and

way of making wine’.<sup>49</sup> Again, the ‘Sauterne’ of which he speaks would have been a generic dry white Bordeaux or Graves style of wine. Donald Ryrie remembered the wine of the vineyard in 1870 as ‘capital, sound and well flavoured’.<sup>50</sup>

The 1840s were difficult times for Switzerland during which republicans and royalists jostled for power. Switzerland experienced civil war in 1847 and, in 1848 a new liberal federation of Swiss cantons was formed. In March of that year, republican forces seized power in protestant Neuchâtel canton from the royalist aristocracy. Not surprisingly, those individuals whose sympathies tended, either by conviction or association, to lie with the conservative and Catholic causes, were most inclined to leave. Unrest continued, culminating in an unsuccessful counter-revolution in 1856. With the triumph of liberal forces, the well to do and elite of society faced the loss of place and position, and possibly worse in the case of the politically active or militant. As the son of a



Neuchâtel doctor, Paul de Castella was identified with the town's bourgeoisie or 'burgher class', and he was involved on behalf of the conservative Separatist League (the Sonderbund) of Catholic cantons seeking to break away from the Swiss confederation. The outcome of Switzerland's three-week civil war in 1847 left him a marked man with the realisation that he could never expect any preferment in government service.<sup>51</sup> These were times for young men of a conservative inclination to be out of the country. Together with a friend and member of one of Neuchâtel's most influential families, Adolphe de Meuron-Osterwald, Paul de Castella went to England to learn the language and prepare himself for a career in banking or commerce. It was while in England that he heard of the fortunes to be made farming cattle and sheep at Port Phillip. With de Meuron, who was Madame La Trobe's nephew, he decided to visit Port Phillip, arriving in 1849. In the following years friends and relatives who followed a similar path joined him. These included two other nephews of Madame La Trobe, Guillaume and Samuel de Pury, in 1852, and, in 1854, Paul's elder brother Hubert. The de Pury family had been given the title of hereditary baron by Frederick II of Prussia, and Guillaume was the son of a member of the Grand Council of Neuchâtel.<sup>52</sup> Hubert de Castella had kept clear of the troubles of his native land. He preferred Paris where, in the 1840s, he led a bohemian life studying architecture, became a naturalised Frenchman and accepted a commission with the first Regiment of the Chasseurs. But he, too, would be lured by the promise of wealth to Australia. The common thread among the early experiences of these young men is a pre-existing condition of exile prior to being attracted to Australia by stories of the riches to be obtained. They were already adventurer-exiles. The presence of the La Trobes in a position of power and influence offered the possibility of patronage and protection in their ambitions.

William Ryrie sold the Yering preemptive right in 1850 to Paul de Castella and Adolphe de Meuron.<sup>53</sup> Charles La Trobe visited Yering with Sophie, 'driving her in my drag with [the horses] Calverley, & Prince outrigger, Castella with us' over three days in February, 1852.<sup>54</sup> He visited again in January, 1854, riding up in a single afternoon.<sup>55</sup> Charles and Sophie must have been pleased that a relative and his friend and fellow countryman had been able to secure such a valuable property. A question arises as to why he makes notes of visits to the Ryries and de Castella and not to his wife's countrymen in the Geelong district, notwithstanding his many journeys through those parts. The explanation may be an oversight or lie in part in the relative social standing of the two groups.

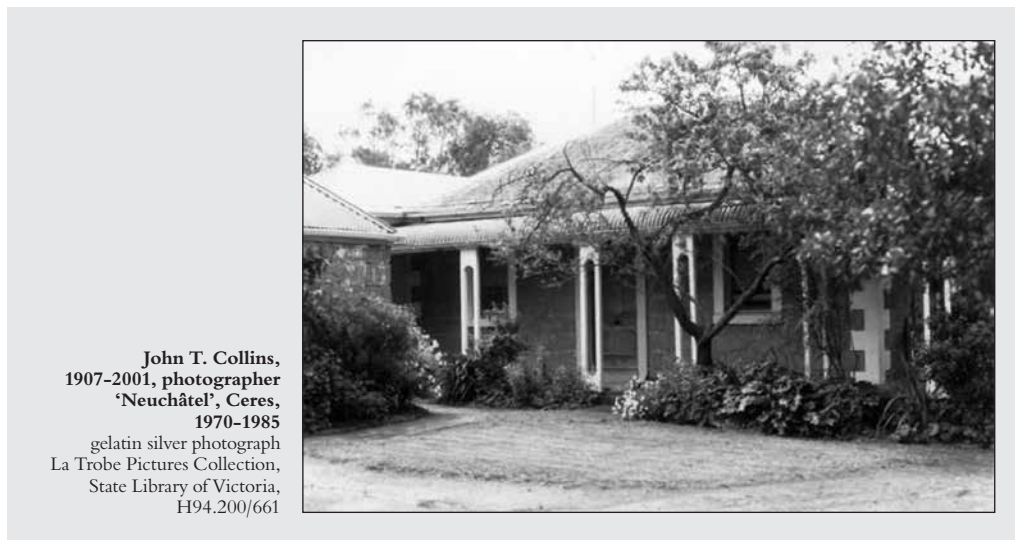
The Ryries were important early squatters. De Meuron was of Madame La Trobe's family and Paul de Castella was a young Swiss gentleman of note. They were members of the noblesse of Fribourg, with a fourteenth century descent and had served the Bourbons in a military capacity in both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>56</sup> They were from Gruyères originally where, according to Paul's nephew, François de Castella's romantic recollection, 'they had been "seigneurs" or mountain chieftains in a small way' for centuries.<sup>57</sup> By the 1840s, however, they were thoroughly urbanised members of the professional upper middle-classes.

Just because we have few details of Charles and Sophie La Trobe interacting with the Swiss vigneron of the Geelong district does not mean that this did not occur. We know that on the eve of his final departure for England and Switzerland, Charles La Trobe gave Rose Pellet, the daughter of his servant of long-standing, Charlotte Matthey, away in marriage to a Swiss vigneron of the Geelong district, Frédéric Guillaume Amiet. La Trobe was deputising in this instance for a long absent and discarded father. He maintained a paternalistic interest in the couple, continuing a correspondence.<sup>58</sup> We know from Georgiana McCrae's diary that Amiet's wine was served at the fancy dress ball held in Melbourne to celebrate separation from New South Wales on 28 November 1850.<sup>59</sup> His Honour the Superintendent and his Lady headed the list of 'visitors'.<sup>60</sup> An even more telling association followed with the arrival of Victor Joseph Clement Deschamps with two young sons in January 1854. The family hailed originally from the commune of Saint-Pierre-le-Vieux in the Saône-et-Loire department of Burgundy in eastern France. Joseph's father, Antoine Marie, had migrated to Switzerland late in the nineteenth century, and Joseph was born in 1813 at Cressier at Neuchâtel. Prior to emigrating Joseph had managed a large vineyard estate at Peseux and had his own small, three-acre vineyard outside the town. For twelve generations, it had been the custom of the Deschamps family for each first-born member of the family to become a grape grower. The circumstances of Joseph's emigration to Victoria are puzzling. Deschamps family information claims the father was invited, either by La Trobe or by Paul de Castella, although this is not proven. It seems that Deschamps had known La Trobe, who was twelve years his senior, as a French-speaking school teacher from England sometime between 1824 and 1827, when Joseph was aged 12-15, and also Paul de Castella. A clue as to the Deschamps family's motivation may lie in the father's 'pronounced royalist views'. With the tide rising in favour of republicanism at home, he may have decided that the future

lay with vine growing on the other side of the world. Deschamps' intention from the start was to grow grapes and to make wine in Victoria. On his arrival Deschamps and his two sons stayed at La Trobe's Jolimont cottage pending a journey to Yering. His wife, Susanne, and youngest son, Clément, would follow in 1856.<sup>61</sup> It is indicative of the sense of obligation that La Trobe felt to the people of Neuchâtel and old friends that this gesture to accommodate them should have been made at all. These last years in gold rush Victoria brought with them heavy responsibilities as Lieutenant Governor. Even though La Trobe had submitted his resignation in December, 1852, he was not able to relinquish his office. In addition, his wife, Sophie, had not been well. She preceded him to Europe and died on 30 January 1854. Charles sailed on 6 May 1854.<sup>62</sup>

Meanwhile the business of starting vineyards gathered apace. But when Paul de Castella acquired Yering station in 1850 he did not intend to be a vigneron but a pastoralist.

Captain Acland Anderson, and friends, including his cousin J.A. Panton... A French sea-captain to whom my uncle had extended hospitality had sent him, as a parting gift, some cases of Pommard, which was much appreciated as a welcome accompaniment to the evening meal after a strenuous day in the open air, at these occasional foregatherings. One evening, my uncle's announcement 'No more Pommard' was met with cries of consternation. But he produced some wine, made locally by an old Burgundian Swiss employee from the original Ryrie vineyard. It was brought from the cellar in a hand-wash jug and sampled. 'Better than Pommard' was the enthusiastic verdict.<sup>63</sup>



His main work experience had been in a bank. Neither Paul de Castella nor his brother, Hubert, had any viticultural experience. The decision to establish a commercial vineyard was a product of the optimism of the times, and has been told in anecdotal form by Paul's nephew, François:

My uncle became engaged to Miss Lilly Anderson, daughter of Colonel Joseph Anderson, C.B. who commanded the 50th Regiment; they were married in 1856. A little before this, fishing and shooting being good, Yering was a favourite resort of my uncle's future brother-in-law,

Pommard is a commune in the Côte d'Or department of Burgundy in eastern France which produces an illustrious red wine of the Côte de Beaune. But in the nineteenth century before the Appellation Controlée, it was a catch-all descriptor for often ordinary red wine from the region and beyond, exported from France to the English speaking world.<sup>64</sup> We should not be surprised that the hand-made wine in the Yering cellar from the Ryrie era made by the Swiss vigneron, Dardel, compared so favourably.<sup>65</sup> Captain Anderson proposed forming a large commercial vineyard on the strength of this. This they had the means to do. Paul de Castella's father-in-law, Colonel Anderson, was wealthy, a former commandant of Norfolk Island and a prominent British Imperial military man who

had served all over the globe and had chosen, in 1848, to retire in Port Phillip.<sup>66</sup> The family were well connected and de Castella's marriage was, indeed, a fortunate one. Imported French wine and brandy would have been a part of the Anderson lifestyle. Import substitution of this type and on this scale was, however, a big step.

Anderson family money in the form of Miss Lilly Anderson's dowry – after whom the Shire of Lillydale (later spelled as Lilydale) took its name – helped in the establishment of the Yering vineyard. Another well-connected young Swiss, Samuel de Pury, undertook the planting contract in 1857. He relinquished this after three years on discovering that he was working at a loss. Fortunately, the Deschamps family of father and three able sons could take his place. After spending time in England, learning the language and studying agriculture, Frédéric Guillaume de Pury, the eldest son of a member of the Grand Council of Neuchâtel, sailed for Victoria in 1852, whereupon he worked at Yering tending cattle. Paul's elder brother, Hubert, arrived in the colony in 1854, and in 1855 Hubert and Guillaume combined their assets to purchase Dalry station from the Ryries. Hubert and Guillaume parted company with Hubert returning to Switzerland in 1856, leaving Dalry in Guillaume de Pury's hands. He sold it in 1858, renting land on nearby Killara to raise sheep and breed horses. Guillaume de Pury visited Switzerland in 1861, leaving his brother Samuel to look after his interests. In 1862 he returned with Hubert de Castella intending, like Paul before them, to take up sheep farming. Hubert had by this time already published his first book on the new land, *Les Squatteurs Australiens*, in Paris in 1861.<sup>67</sup> The two men found sheep expensive but the young colony in the afterglow of the gold rushes infatuated with viticulture. Their commitment properly dates from this time. Their venture would not have been possible but for the practical assistance they received from their fellow countrymen, as François de Castella later observed: 'having little technical knowledge of the art, they could scarcely have succeeded but for the collaboration of quite a number of Swiss compatriots, well versed in vine-culture and winemaking, to whom was relegated the actual work'.<sup>68</sup>

Deschamps, his sons, and others like him were the first to provide the large wine estates of the upper Yarra Valley with a pool of skilled viticultural labour. They enabled the de Castellans and the de Purys to entertain grandiose wine making ambitions and to live the life of grandees, for a time. Not all of the young aristocrats followed a clear path into wine or stayed there. Adolph de Meuron sold his share in Yering to Paul de Castella for £5000 – more

than three times what he had initially paid – to trade speculatively in real estate and provisions at the height of the gold rush. He then returned to Europe to buy more goods.<sup>69</sup> Samuel de Pury returned to Europe in 1868. Various transformations of his grand estate, St Hubert's, followed before Hubert de Castella was forced to sell out, leaving Victoria an embittered man in 1886 and only returning a year before his death in 1906. As he wistfully pointed out in the ironically titled *John Bull's Vineyard* (1885), it was the workers not the masters who eventually succeeded in the new land.<sup>70</sup> His son, François, was among them. He trained to take over the management of a great family vineyard but pursued an important career as a government viticultural expert instead, a career that was instrumental in recovering viticulture and winemaking in Victoria from the near extinction it experienced in the final decades of the nineteenth century.<sup>71</sup>

Sophie and Charles La Trobe did not stay in Victoria long enough to see the full development of the many initiatives they helped set in train. But we may ask what the longer term consequences of their actions were in encouraging their Swiss wine making compatriots? Undoubtedly, they contributed to at least two of Victoria's agricultural regions becoming known as viticultural areas, the Geelong region and the upper Yarra Valley. Swiss immigrants developed an association with viticulture and winemaking in other regions but are principally associated with these two. The fact that both Geelong and the upper Yarra Valley subsequently went out of grape growing and wine production does not diminish the achievements of large and small producers in these regions. Those of the Yarra Valley, in particular, were considerable, with the great estates of Yering, St Hubert's and Yeringberg and others producing white and red table wines of great repute, and achieving success at international exhibitions both at home and abroad. The achievements of the Geelong district were clouded by the decline of viticulture in the 1870s and subsequent infestation by Grape Phylloxera. The district vineyards were destroyed forcibly by state decree in the 1880s. The initiative was highly controversial and in the light of subsequent scientific knowledge unnecessary. It is instructive that both these regions, Geelong and the Yarra Valley, have since been replanted to vines as high quality, cool climate table wine producing regions – in some cases by descendants of the original settlers. By and large though, few, if any, descendants of the Swiss immigrant settlers of the 1840s and 1850s could be said to have maintained any continuous association with wine production.<sup>72</sup>

There is still a discussion to be had about why Victoria's nineteenth century wine industry endured the difficulties it did. The fact is that it dwindled in the first decades of the twentieth century and disappeared in Southern Victoria. Had it not experienced such a break, it is possible that Victoria could have experienced the continuity that was the South Australian experience where German and other descendents of early settlers developed vineyards, made wine and built family-based concerns. This, of course, presupposes that producers of table wine in southern Victoria would have had greater success than they did in the nineteenth century in persuading Australians to drink wine. By the middle decades of the twentieth century,

the wine Australians mostly drank was fortified. Australians did not become enthusiastic drinkers of table wines until at least the 1960s. The Australian wine industry as it developed in the period prior to this that we have been concerned with, was driven forward in advance of a domestic market by enthusiasts and visionaries, with vine stocks and hard-won expertise evolved from those traditional practices associated with Europe and immigrant groups. It was kept going from the late 1880s mainly by an export trade with Britain. Victoria, however, was the location of important early initiatives in which Swiss immigrants were prominent. For this some measure of credit must go back to Charles and Sophie La Trobe.

- 
- 1 S. Wegmann & C.B. Thornton-Smith, 'La Trobe and Swiss vine Growers in Victoria' *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, April 1988 vol. 73, pp. 287-295.
  - 2 James Jupp (ed), *The Australian People*, Angus & Robertson Publishers, Sydney 1988, p. 811.
  - 3 Dr Phillip Norrie, *Vineyards of Sydney*, Horwitz Grahame, Sydney 1990; Eric Ramsden, 'James Busby: The Prophet of Australian Viticulture' *Journal Royal Australian Historical Society*, vol. 26, 1940 pt 5, pp.261-386; Ruth Teale, 'Sir William Macarthur' *Australian Dictionary of Biography* vol. 5, pp. 124-5.
  - 4 Maro [pseud.] *Sir William Macarthur, Letters on the Culture of the Vine, Fermentation, and the Management of Wine in the Cellar*, Statham and Forster, Sydney 1844.
  - 5 Hubert de Castella, *John Bull's Vineyard*, Sands & MacDougall, Melbourne 1886, pp. 12-13.
  - 6 *Ibid.* See also M.H. Ellis, *John Macarthur*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1955, p. 429.
  - 7 S. Wegmann and C.B. Thornton-Smith, 'La Trobe and Swiss vine growers in Victoria' *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society* April 1988 vol. 73, pt 4, p. 290.
  - 8 De Castella, *John Bull's Vineyard*, p.12.
  - 9 Hubert de Castella, *John Bull's Vineyard*, p.13.
  - 10 Susanne Wegmann, *The Swiss in Australia*, Verlag Ruegger, Grusch (Switzerland) 1989, p. 24; Raymond Henderson, *From Jolimont to Yering and along our Yarra Valleys with Neuchatel's Bachelor Vignerons*, Roundabout Publications, Kilsyth Victoria, 2006.
  - 11 Raymond Henderson, *From Jolimont to Yering*, 2006, pp.170,172.
  - 12 Holograph letter, 9 March 1840 in *Macarthur papers*, vol. 26, pp. 179-82, Mitchell Library A 2922.
  - 13 La Trobe to John Murray, 15 December, 1840. *Letters of Charles Joseph La Trobe* edited by L. J Blake, Government Printer, Melbourne, 1975, p.12.
  - 14 John and Robert Bakewell, their property Yallambie on the Plenty River comprised a river flat of four to five acres laid out as a garden, orchard and vineyard [see George Alexander Gilbert's pastel 'J & R Bakewell's Property The Plenty', La Trobe Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria, H29575].
  - 15 Charles Swanston, 'Swanston, Charles (1789 – 1850)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 2, Melbourne University Press, 1967, pp 500-501.
  - 16 W.R. Brownhill, *The History of Geelong and Corio Bay*, Wilks & Co, Melbourne, 1955, p.560.
  - 17 *Australasian* 26 January 1867, p. 122.
  - 18 *The Vine: with instructions for its cultivation, for a period of six years, the treatment of the soil, and how to make wine from Victorian grapes*, Heath and Cordell, Geelong, 1859, p. 8.
  - 19 Henderson, *From Jolimont to Yering*, p.172.
  - 20 *The Vine*, 1859; see David Dunstan, *Better Than Pommard: a history of wine in Victoria*, Australian Scholarly Publishing, 1994, pp. 39-40.
  - 21 Ian Wynd, *Barrabool: Land of the Magpie*, Barrabool Shire, Torquay Victoria, 1992, p. 56.
  - 22 *Australasian* 10 November, 1866; See also *The Vineyards of Victoria as Visited by Ebenezer Ward in 1864*, Sullivans Cove, Adelaide 1980, p. 1.
  - 23 *Argus* 16 February, 1847, p.3.
  - 24 Wynd, *Barrabool*, p. 51.
  - 25 *Geelong Advertiser*, 24 January, 1846 cited *ibid.*
  - 26 *Geelong Advertiser* 29 January, 1861; cited Wynd, *Barrabool* p. 51.
-



- 27 The Vine, p.7.
- 28 Argus 8 December, 1877, p.9.
- 29 The Vineyards of Victoria as Visited by Ebenezer Ward in 1864 Adelaide 1980, p. 34.
- 30 Charles Joseph La Trobe, 'Memoranda of Journeys, Excursions and Aborigines', Australian Notes 1834-1954, edited by Dianne Reilly, Tarcoola Press, Yarra Glen, Victoria, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne and Boz Publishing, Mansfield, 2006, vol.1, p.93.
- 31 Paul de Serville, Port Phillip Gentlemen and Good Society in Melbourne before the Gold Rushes, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1980, p.194.
- 32 Ibid; R.V. Billis and A.S. Kenyon Pastures New; An Account of the Pastoral Occupation of Port Phillip Macmillan and Company, London, 1930, p. 63.
- 33 Henderson, 2006 From Jolimont to Yering, pp.173,176.
- 34 L.J. Blake (ed.), Letters of Charles Joseph La Trobe Melbourne 1975, p.24.
- 35 Henderson, 2006 From Jolimont to Yering p.176; Australasian 17 November, 1866.
- 36 Argus 17 October, 1861, p.6.
- 37 James Busby, A Manual of Plain Directions for Planting and Cultivating Vineyards and for Making Wine in New South Wales, R Mansfield for the executors of R. Howe, Sydney, 1830; See Maro (Sir William Macarthur) op.cit., Sir T.L. Mitchell, Notes on the Cultivation of the Vine and the Olive, Sydney, D.L. Welch, 1847.
- 38 James Macarthur to F.L.S. Merewether 11 February, 1847, HRA 1, vol 25, p. 511.
- 39 Superintendent of Port Phillip (La Trobe) to Colonial Secretary 20 July 1849 49/73 Incoming Correspondence AONSW. Mrs Jan Ross of Picton, NSW, has researched this correspondence, See Descent, Journal of the Society of Australian Genealogists vol. 23 no. 4, pp. 143-147.
- 40 Ibid; Superintendent of Port Phillip to Colonial Secretary 20 July 1849 cited ibid; Superintendent of Port Phillip to Swanston Willis & Co. 7 August 1849, Outgoing Correspondence 49/75 Public Record Office Victoria cited ibid.
- 41 Ibid.
- 42 The Vine, p. 8.
- 43 This paragraph draws on the above and the genealogical researches of Dr John Tetaz of Templestowe on which Wynd also draws. See John Tetaz, From Boudry to the Barrabool Hills: the Swiss Vignerons of Geelong, Australian Scholarly Publishing, Kew, 1995.
- 44 Bischoff correspondence quoted in Olivier Rychner 'Quand Geelong Prenait de la Bouteille: Vignerons Suisse et Neuchâtelois dans la Colonie de Victoria (Australie)', Mémoire de licence, Institut d'Histoire, Université de Neuchâtel, 1998, p.23. My thanks to Dr Dianne Reilly for this reference.
- 45 For a more extensive discussion see David Dunstan, Better Than Pommard! A History of Wine in Victoria, Australian Scholarly Publishing, Kew Victoria, 1994.
- 46 Henderson, From Jolimont to Yering, p.133.
- 47 François de Castella, Handbook on Viticulture for Victoria, Government Printer, Melbourne 1891, pp. 32 & 44.
- 48 Maro [pseud.] Sir William Macarthur, Letters on the Cultivation of the Vine, Sydney, 1844, p. iv; Gardeners' Chronicle and Agricultural Gazette (London), 4 May, 1872, pp. 607-8.
- 49 'Garryowen' (pseud. Edmund Finn), The Chronicles of Early Melbourne 1835 to 1852 Melbourne 1888.
- 50 William Ryrie thought Miller's Burgundy (Pinot Meunier) 'the most suitable for the colder climate of Victoria, and for wines, although not so good for the table' Australasian 6 August 1870, p. 185.
- 51 See K.A.R. Horn, Castella, 'Charles Hubert and Paul Frederic' ADB vol. 3, pp. 367-8; C.B. Thornton-Smith, Australian Squatters by Hubert de Castella Melbourne 1987 'introduction'; Lynette J. Peel, 'Viticulture at Geelong and Lillydale', Victorian Historical Magazine August 1965, pp. 154-173.
- 52 See G.G. de Pury, 'Frédéric Guillaume de Pury', ADB vol. 4, pp. 56-57.
- 53 See Francois de Castella, Early Victorian Wine-Growing, p. 145; Marian Aveling, The Billanook Country 1837-1972 Carlton 1972, pp.14-17; Lynette J. Peel, 'Viticulture at Geelong and Lillydale', Victorian Historical Magazine August 1965, pp. 154-173. Garryowen, The Chronicles of Early Melbourne Melbourne 1888, p. 432. C.B. Thornton-Smith, notes to Hubert de Castella, Australian Squatters Melbourne 1987 esp. to ch. XIX, p.186. Allom Lovell & Associates Pty Ltd, 'Chateau Yering: A Brief History' Melbourne 1992.
- 54 Charles Joseph La Trobe, 'Memoranda of Journeys, Excursions and Aborigines', Australian Notes 1834-1954, Tarcoola Press, Yarra Glen, Victoria, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne and Boz Publishing, Mansfield, 2006, vol.1, p.210.
- 55 Ibid., p.222.
- 56 Paul de Serville, Pounds and Pedigrees: the upper class in Victoria 1850-90, Oxford University Press Australia, South Melbourne, 1991, p.505.
- 57 François de Castella, 'Early Victorian Wine-Growing', p.146.
- 58 Marriage certificate 3 May 1854, Registrar births, Deaths and Marriages, Victoria, Cited Dianne Reilly, 'Charlotte Pellet, 1800-1877 housekeeper at Jolimont,' La Trobeana, Journal of the C.J. La Trobe Society Inc. vol. 8, no. 1, March 2009, p.7.
- 59 Hugh McCrae ed., Georgiana's Journal, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1934, 1966 2nd edn., p.210.
- 60 Argus 29 November, 1850, p.2.
- 61 Jack Deschamps 'The Deschamps Family' ms (1977); personal communication, Noel Deschamps, South Yarra, 11

- May 1993; David Dunstan, 'Deschamps, Victor Joseph Clement (1812 – 1878)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, Supplementary Volume, Melbourne University Press, 2005, pp 100-101.
- 62 Jill Eastwood, 'La Trobe, Charles Joseph (1801 – 1875)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, Volume 2, Melbourne University Press, 1967, pp 89-93.
- 63 'Early Victorian Wine-Growing', p. 146.
- 64 Alexis Lichine, Guide to the Wines and Vineyards of France, London 1979, p. 166.
- 65 Hubert de Castella, John Bull's Vineyard Melbourne 1886, p. 49; Wegmann & Thornton-Smith, p. 292; Thornton-Smith, 'Notes', n.8 p. 189.
- 66 John V. Barry, 'Joseph Anderson', ADB vol 1, pp. 13-14.
- 67 See Hubert de Castella, Australian Squatters Translation, With an Introduction and Notes by C.B. Thornton-Smith Melbourne 1987.
- 68 François de Castella, 'Some Pioneer Lillydale Vignerons' Victorian Historical Magazine December 1943, p. 52. Personal communication and family memorabilia belonging to the late Mr Noel Deschamps of South Yarra; Arnold Deschamps, Back to Lilydale Re-Union Lilydale 1931. Wegmann and Thornton-Smith, *ibid.*; Thornton-Smith, introduction and notes, Australian Squatters; David Dunstan, 'Deschamps, Victor Joseph Clement (1812 – 1878)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, Supplementary Volume, Melbourne University Press, 2005, pp 100-101.
- 69 C.B. Thornton-Smith, n.4 to Ch. IV in Australian Squatters p.173; Horn, ADB vol. 3, pp. 367-8. 'A History of the de Pury's in Australia'.
- 70 Hubert de Castella, John Bull's Vineyard, p. 258.
- 71 David Dunstan, 'de Castella, François Robert (1867 – 1953)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, Volume 13, Melbourne University Press, 1993, pp 604-605. See also David Dunstan, Better Than Pommard: a history of wine in Victoria, Australian Scholarly Publishing, 1994.
- 72 The exception might be said to be the de Pury family of Yeringberg, although even here the Yeringberg vineyard went out of production in the 1920s and was not revived until the 1960s.

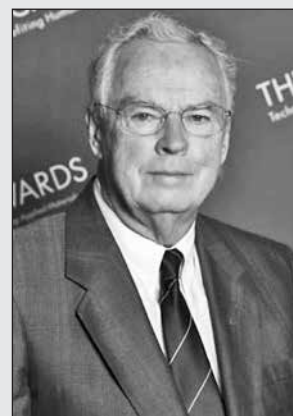
# Dr Brian La Trobe: *a modern day La Trobe* by Dr Dianne Reilly

---

*This introduction given by Dianne Reilly on the occasion of a lecture delivered by Dr Brian La Trobe at The Lyceum Club on 4 March 2011 which was attended by about 40 members of the C.J La Trobe Society. Apart from Brian's claim to fame through his membership of the La Trobe family, he has had, himself, 'a fascinating career'.*

The La Trobe Society was very fortunate to have as special guest speaker for the first meeting of this 10th anniversary year Dr Brian La Trobe of Johannesburg in South Africa. Brian and his wife Peggy kindly agreed to visit us in Melbourne to meet with members of the La Trobe Society and to tell us something of the life and work of the illustrious Christian Ignatius La Trobe who, as we know, was the father of Charles Joseph La Trobe.

Brian completed his undergraduate studies at Cape Town and London Universities. He undertook postgraduate studies at the University of Witwatersrand, popularly known as 'Wits', and at the University of Rochester in New York State. He started his career as an industrial chemist, but soon qualified as a dental surgeon at the University of London and at the Royal College of Surgeons. He practised dentistry in Grahamstown for 25 years, and concurrently, continued research which was sponsored by the South African Water Research Commission at Rhodes University.



Dr Brian La Trobe

Brian was elected a Grahamstown City Councillor for 12 years, and was Mayor for the years 1982 to 1986. He was active on the Council of Rhodes University for 20 years, retiring as its Vice-Chairman to pursue his passion for, as he puts it, his 'new mistress, the environment'.

His research career has centred around waste management and energy from waste, and he has over 30 scientific papers to his credit at national and international levels. Brian designed and oversaw the installation of South Africa's first landfill project which resulted in the generation of energy.

The Enviro Loo system was invented by Brian La Trobe, in his response to the sanitation challenges facing the African continent. His research in the 1980's and 1990s culminated in the development of an effective waterless, on-site, dry sanitation toilet system – the Enviro Loo – that functions without water, electricity or chemicals. The Enviro Loo runs on wind and sun alone. This evaporating and dehydrating toilet system has been tried, tested and evaluated in the field, including scientific, health and environmental impact studies as well as community feedback

Brian established the company Enviro Options and began manufacturing, marketing and installing the Enviro Loo. It is now manufactured in other countries as well as South Africa, and is distributed to 39 other countries including Australia. To date 53,000 units have been installed worldwide and the company has come a long way since its first exports to Botswana and Ghana.

Brian has been the recipient of many awards, including in 1997:

The Gold Award for the best Innovation and Contribution to Health Care in Africa by the Organisation of African Union, and an International Patent from the World Intellectual Property Organisation; and in 2005, the prestigious

US Tech Award of Innovation at the San Jose Museum of Innovation in Silicon Valley, California – when he was nominated as the Intel Environment Award Winner.

This is certainly a very impressive background on our guest speaker which has enabled us to learn something of his valuable contribution to technology benefitting humanity'

# The Visit of Christian Ignatius La Trobe to South Africa in 1815

by Dr Brian La Trobe

---

*Text of a lecture given to The C.J La Trobe Society at The Lyceum Club on Friday 4 March 2011. Introduced by Dr Dianne Reilly.*

*'The La Trobe Society was very fortunate to have as special guest speaker for the first meeting of this 10th anniversary year Dr Brian La Trobe of Johannesburg in South Africa. Brian and his wife Peggy kindly agreed to visit us in Melbourne to meet with members of the La Trobe Society and to tell us something of the life and work of his illustrious ancestor Christian Ignatius La Trobe who was the father of Charles Joseph La Trobe.'*

**T**hank you for the invitation to address your association on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the formation of the Charles Joseph La Trobe Society, named in honour of the first Lieutenant Governor of the Colony of Victoria after separation from New South Wales in 1851.

I attained my OBE at the end of 2009. That's not the Order of the British Empire but the 'Over Bloody Eighty' society, and it was then that I decided it was time to hang up my travelling boots! However, when Dr Dianne Reilly invited me to give this presentation, I could not resist the offer. Dr Reilly and I have been associated through our research on the history of the La Trobe family for almost two decades. Over a number of years, we have both attended international symposia on La Trobe ancestry in Paris, in London and in Baltimore in the United States. In the White House we saw a portrait of Benjamin Henry Latrobe, younger brother of Christian Ignatius.

Dianne has asked me to tell you something of the life of Christian Ignatius La Trobe who visited South Africa in 1815. He came to settle some differences of opinion between the United Brethren of the Moravian Church and the then Governor of the Cape Colony, Sir Charles Somerset. Christian Ignatius La Trobe was the father of Charles Joseph. He had been made Secretary of the Moravian Church in England in 1795. His portrait displays the definite similarity between father and son.

There is something in the La Trobe gene pool that emphasises a likeness amongst males of the tribe over international borders. While in Baltimore at the La Trobe International Symposium in 2004, we were taken to view the facade of the old United States Naval Dockyard which was designed by Benjamin Henry Latrobe, a brother of Christian Ignatius. As we La Trobes milled around this building taking pictures, a young American naval officer was heard to say: 'Who are all these people? They all look the

same!’ In the book *La Trobes around the world 1462 – 1997*, there is a portrait of Jean-Joachim Latrobe (1771-1832)<sup>1</sup>. It is the ‘spitting image’ of my own father!! We all have that distinctive La Trobe nose!

Benjamin Henry Latrobe (1764-1820) is considered to be the father of architecture in the United States. He was the first fully trained architect to work and teach in America. Latrobe was the resident architect during the rebuilding of the US Capitol and White House buildings after the burning of Washington by the British in 1812. He also designed and built the recently-restored Baltimore Cathedral and many other prominent buildings, and was a friend of President Thomas Jefferson. He knew President George Washington well enough to be allowed to make line drawings of the first President and his family.

Benjamin’s brother, Christian Ignatius La Trobe did not come to South Africa on a pleasure cruise. He came to protect his religious flock from the tantrums of the Governor of the Colony. For those times he was considered, at age 58, to be an old man. As this story progresses, you will begin to understand that he must have been remarkably fit for his age. Sailing ships were not for sissies! Ox-wagons were no better and there was a complete absence of recognisable roads.

In the company of six other Moravian ministers, Christian Ignatius sailed on the outgoing tide from Gravesend on the River Thames on 1 October 1815. The vessel was the sailing ship *Albion*. A day later, the vessel managed to clear the mouth of the Thames, out into the English Channel and headed south. La Trobe’s detailed description of the voyage is well worth the read. It is a typical story of hardship aboard ships of the day: his fear of storms, when he preferred to be soaked on deck as opposed to being holed up in a small cabin; his terror when destructive ocean waves broke into his cabin with great force, soaking everything in sight; the dicey navigation; his loss of appetite; and the bad taste of the stored water as the voyage progressed. The only contact with the outside world was when he handed letters to passing ships heading north to assure loved ones that he was still alive.

Finally, on 23 December, after eighty four days at sea, the welcoming sight of Table Mountain appeared on the horizon. La Trobe and his fellow passengers landed in Table Bay on 24 December, very happy to be back on terra firma. They were taken to the house of a Mrs Disandt where they rested from the tedious and long voyage. They were soon investigating their new surroundings with walks along the

foot of the mountain. However, within days of arrival, Christian soon had an audience with the Governor. Happily they turned out to be kindred spirits. Much of the Governor’s antagonism to the missionaries at Genadendal and Groenekloof (Mamre of today) was dissipated by Christian’s charm.

Soon after Christmas, four wagons arrived in Cape Town to transport La Trobe to Genadendal via the other Moravian missionary settlement at Mamre. Christian Ignatius was fascinated with these ox-wagons, each drawn by sixteen oxen. The team driver sat on a bench seat, armed with a long whip which he cracked over the heads of the oxen to get them moving. The driver knew each ox by name which he would call out to encourage them to pull harder to keep the wagon moving. The leading pair of oxen was led usually by a young African lad to keep them



**Thomas Barber, 1768-1843, artist**  
**Christian Ignatius La Trobe, 1758-1836**  
 Oil on canvas  
 National Trust of Australia (Victoria)

from straying from the path of direction. The body of each wagon was covered with a hooped framework overlaid with sail cloth. Both ends were closed with a flap of similar cloth to protect passengers from the wind and rain. There were no springs to absorb the bumps and cavities of the primitive roads or tracks. Usually, when the passengers could no longer stand the shakes and bumps of the wagon’s unforgiving suspension, they gained relief by walking alongside. This was feasible, for oxen were never known to be fleet of foot!

Mamre was about 30 miles north of Cape Town. That first evening, the party made camp, having covered about fifteen miles. La Trobe wrote:

... we took up our night’s lodging in the wilderness. In about an hour’s time, we unyoked the bullocks, and

left them to seek their supper among the bushes. This is always done, if possible, at a place where there is a stream or pool of fresh water. The Hottentots having lighted a fire, a mat was spread on the ground to leeward of a large bush of the poison-apple, which screened us from a sharp south-east wind ... Coffee was boiled; of which with some eggs, cold meat, cakes, and milk, we made an excellent supper sitting round the fire. After our repast we retired into the wagons to rest. <sup>2</sup>

Today, nearly 200 years later, that southeaster still blows in the summer. It is known as the 'Cape Doctor' as it blows away all the city's pollution and dispels the summer's heat.

Next morning, eleven of the oxen could not be found. An extended search proved fruitless. The party continued with two wagons, leaving the Hottentot gentlemen to find the missing beasts and to follow later with the remaining vehicles.

The next morning, a meeting was held with all the missionary staff. The Moravians had a problem at Mamre. They had been granted a settlement at the site by a previous Governor. The next Governor fancied the site as a holiday location for himself. In order to get rid of the missionaries, he forbade them to cut down any trees for firewood! When Sir Charles Somerset arrived, he would not entertain any pleas from them, treating them with complete disdain. This was one of the main reasons for La Trobe's visit to the Cape. His charm and careful diplomacy soon had Sir Charles on his side. He reversed the decision to move the Moravians from Mamre. He also gave La Trobe full permission to make his journey into the interior of the Colony to seek a site for a third mission. He granted him permission to commandeer fresh teams of oxen from inland farmers which was a huge benefit to the success of his trip. On his return to Cape Town, La Trobe had an invitation from the Governor to spend a few days at his residence at Newlands where he was introduced to all the most important members of the Government of the Cape Colony, and a Captain Hamilton of the Royal Navy. Hamilton, an old acquaintance of Christian Ignatius, had taken Napoleon Bonaparte to his banishment on the Island of St Helena. During this time, La Trobe also visited the Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden nestled at the foot of Table Mountain in Cape Town, where he marvelled at the array of plant specimens he had not seen before.

La Trobe paid a short visit to Stellenbosch before leaving for Genadendal. Of this delightful town, he noted:

Nothing can be more delightful than the shady avenues planted in every street, defending the inhabitants and their dwellings from the burning rays of the sun.<sup>3</sup>

He described how he was met at a miserable inn by additional oxen from Genadendal, at the foot of the Hottentot-Holland Mountain range. They intended to make the crossing in the cool of the night. La Trobe mentions that

This kloof is celebrated in the journals of our missionaries for its difficult and steep ascent and the badness of the road ... I now found the accounts ... [by] no means exaggerated.<sup>4</sup>

The extra twenty-four oxen increased the total of beasts to fifty-four to help with the passage over the mountains. Having gained the summit, La Trobe found the descent more gradual. The party breakfasted on the banks of the Bot River, then most promptly retired to the wagons to sleep, but not Christian Ignatius who recorded:

... always hoping to meet with some remarkable production of nature in this strange land, I walked along the banks of the river towards the hill ... examining the pebbles of various colours ... Here I continued my researches, and saw the first land tortoise, called by the Dutch, Patlooper ...<sup>5</sup>

As his party approached Genadendal, they were met by the entire community who came out on horseback and on foot to bid him welcome. Christian Ignatius described the entrance to Genadendal:

The entrance into the village is through lanes enclosed by hedge-rows, and the dwellings of the missionaries appear under a grove planted by the first three Brethren...Little do I now wonder at the rapture, with which this place is spoken of by travellers as a place ... rendered fruitful and inviting, by the persevering diligence and energy of a few plain, pious, sensible, and judicious men, who came hither, not seeking



their own profit, but that of the most despised of nations; and ... taught them those things, which have made even their earthly dwelling, comparatively, a kind of paradise, and changed filth and misery into comfort and peace.<sup>6</sup>

Genadendal was started by the Moravians in 1737 under the direction of Rev George Schmidt. He taught the local people to read Dutch and other useful skills. The local farmers were displeased when Schmidt started to baptise the heathen as Christians. When the folks in Cape Town some 70 miles away heard of this, they complained that the Genadendal church bell was creating too much noise! Public opinion was mounting against Rev. Schmidt. When he went back to Holland in 1744 to seek more help, the colonial Dutch Government refused to allow him back into the Cape, a decision which devastated him.

The Moravians were only allowed back into the Colony when the British annexed the Cape in 1792. Before leaving in 1744, George Schmidt did two things: firstly, he planted a pear tree in the middle of the missionary garden, and secondly, he gave a young girl living in Genadendal, a copy of the New Testament. When the new missionaries returned after a gap of forty-eight years, they found that the girl, now a blind old lady, was still alive. She had often read the New Testament to the community to keep their faith alive. The Moravians also discovered that the pear tree had become a large tree. Apart from its sustaining fruit, the space below its branches had served as a church, a school and a community meeting place. Christian Ignatius supervised a vigorous pruning to rejuvenate the tree. Sadly, it no longer exists. It was struck by lightning some years later and had to be removed. However, some of its timbers were saved and were used to make a small box to house the fragile, well-thumbed New Testament that was so precious to the young girl. It now has pride of place in the Genadendal Museum.

La Trobe achieved a great deal in the short time he was at Genadendal. He built a new guest house for passing travellers which was sorely needed. Many a traveller to the interior found it a welcome haven of rest. It has recently been restored with kitchen utensils, beds and other fittings from the Museum stores, which the curator believes were used by Christian Ignatius. He presented the community with a large stock of bibles and laid the foundation of the system to maintain and manage the mission.

The wagon in almost pristine condition,

which was used by La Trobe on his two thousand kilometre venture into the interior, is still housed in the Museum, and his portrait hangs in the Museum entrance hall. It is not an exaggeration to say that this great man is treated in terms of almost a deity. Today, members of the community still tiptoe past his portrait and speak in hushed terms when passing. Some of this uncanny adoration of the man rubs off on others like myself. When at Genadendal, I feel his presence and often expect to see him appear around a corner of the church. Genadendal has a walled garden where it is said La Trobe spent time when the rest of the community had their afternoon siesta. It was his favourite place of contemplation. When I go there, I know his spirit is not far away!

In a village close to Genadendal called Caledon, there are some hot natural springs. La Trobe visited them, and he noted 'I found it to be the best possible remedy both against rheumatism and prickly heat, both of which haunt me'.<sup>7</sup> Typically he went armed with a thermometer and recorded that the water at the opening of the spring was 118 degrees Fahrenheit and 112 degrees in the bath.

La Trobe came to know a little bit about the herbs that grow on the slopes of the mountains surrounding Genadendal. The honey bush is harvested, dried and ground. Boiled in water, it produces a tea-like drink which tastes strongly of honey. It is still marketed by the Mission station to this day as 'Honey Tea'. He soon learnt the curative powers of another herb called Buchu, also found in the mountains. This is ground, infused with water and allowed to ferment. It is then distilled to produce a sort of rough brandy known as Buchu Brandy. It might smell remotely medicinal, but the finished product is as rough as a goat's knee and tastes most foul with the kick of a mule. It remains a mystery how this saintly religious man could have come to recommend this potent jungle juice! Once when he complained of a bad headache at Genadendal, someone gave him a slug, and he pronounced that it cured his headache immediately! Thereafter, he recommended it for every conceivable ailment as you will learn as our story unfolds.

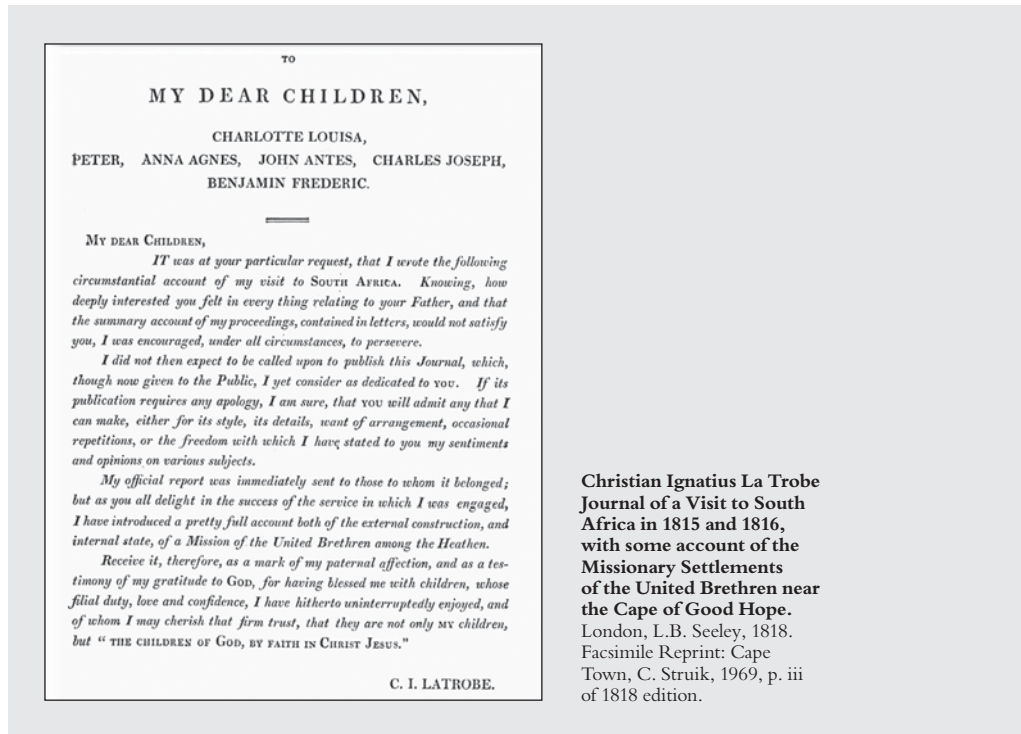
After a couple of months spent sorting out the problems at Genadendal, preparations were made for a venture into the hinterland to seek a place to establish a third mission station. Such was the esteem the Cape Governor held for Christian Ignatius La Trobe that he had instructed the Colony's chief Surveyor General, Mr Melville, to accompany the expedition to give it some official status and to facilitate fresh spans of oxen along the way. Towns or even



villages were few and far between, and their travel was through sparsely populated areas.

Their next port of call was on the coast at Mossel Bay. Mossel Bay had been used as a primitive 'post office' by passing sailing ships since the voyages of discovery in the 1500s by Portuguese sailors such as Vasco da Gama. Traditionally, sailing ships had stopped in Mossel Bay to take on fresh water. Letters were placed under a large stone on the beach. They

Their next stop was a village called Hartenbosch. Here the party visited a carpenter who made furniture from some local timber. He mentions the wood was called 'stink wood' and 'yellow wood'. Today, this wood is still very popular, to the extent the State has prohibited any more felling of these giant trees for the next twenty-five years in an attempt to preserve them. Furniture made from these woods is today much prized, and has become very expensive. It is beautifully grained.



would be picked up by the next ship heading in the opposite direction and would be delivered if and when they eventually reached their port of destination. It was a rather hazardous type of primitive postal service.

While their camp was being prepared, Christian Ignatius took a walk along the beach where he was again fascinated by the colourful rocks and stones he found. Not having his prospector's hammer with him, he tried to break some specimens by hurling one against some bigger boulders. He was obviously not a man of physics for he did not know that every force has an equal and opposite force. One stone came back at him like a tennis ball, catching him close to his right eye. Fortunately it did not break his spectacles but it hurt a great deal. He bathed the wound in sea water but, he said, the pain did not abate until he got back to camp and applied some Buchu Brandy – and, no doubt, took a slug or two as well!

In the nearby town of George, they were met by the local magistrate, Mr Van Kerval, who was fond of music. At an evening welcoming party, La Trobe was happy to play compositions of both Haydn and Mozart which, at that time, were unknown to Van Kerval and his guests. Van Kerval suggested a location close to Plettenberg Bay as a future mission station. Christian Ignatius promised to survey the site along the way. The next part of the journey took the party along what is known today as the Garden Route. He described it as the most beautiful of the entire journey but also very difficult terrain. Van Kerval had to supply many extra oxen to help negotiate the crossing of some deep river estuaries with steep banks. Today, we just skim across concrete bridges while admiring the view, but spare a thought for the La Trobe retinue.

Negotiating the steep decline going down to the river, they felled a tree which was attached to the back of the wagon to act as an extra brake.

Cont. page 28 >>



APPROACH TO SHADYDALE -  
Crossing the River Southward.



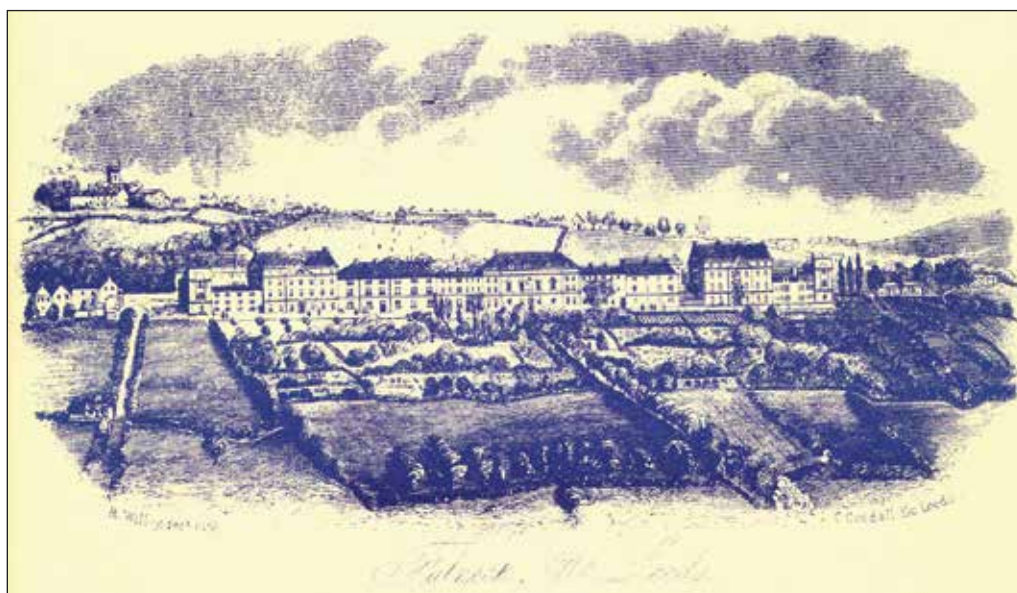
GENERAL VIEW OF THE MISSIONARIES' PREMISES & PART OF THE VILLAGE.



TISKATACKAN -  
In Fortsnang Bay.



THE PARADES.



R. Willey and G. Goodall  
Fulneck, [1851]  
Engraving  
Fulneck Moravian Museum, Yorkshire







**R. Cocking, from original sketches by Christian Ignatius La Trobe reproduced in *Journal of a Visit to South Africa in 1815 and 1816*, (1969).**  
(left to right)

**Approach to Gnadenthal, Crossing the River Sonderend**

Engraving  
From: *Journal of a Visit to South Africa in 1815 and 1816*, Reprint, opposite p. 59

**General View of the Missionaries' Premises; and part of the Village of Gnadenthal**

Engraving  
From: *Journal of a Visit to South Africa in 1815 and 1816*, Reprint, opposite p. 94

**Mossel Bay on the Indian Ocean**

Engraving  
From: *Journal of a Visit to South Africa in 1815 and 1816*, Reprint, opposite p. 139



(left to right)

**Trekatackaw, in Plettenberg bay**

Engraving  
From: *Journal of a Visit to South Africa in 1815 and 1816*, Reprint, opposite p. 152

**The Paerdekop**

Engraving  
From: *Journal of a Visit to South Africa in 1815 and 1816*, Reprint, opposite p. 170

**Interior of the Missionaries Premises at Gnadenthal**

Engraving  
From: *Journal of a Visit to South Africa in 1815 and 1816*, Reprint, opposite p. 271



**Henricus Leonardus van den Houten, 1801-1879, artist**  
**Scene at Yering - gathering grapes, 1875**  
Oil on canvas  
La Trobe Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria,  
H29754

**George Alexander Gilbert, 1815-?, artist**  
**J & R Bakewell's Property The Plenty, c.1850**  
Pastel  
La Trobe Pictures Collection, State Library  
of Victoria, H29575

<< From page 25

The contents of the wagon were unloaded and its rear wheels removed. The body of the wagon was kept upright over the rough track by the travellers hanging onto attached ropes. Their goods and the frame of the vehicle were taken across the river in boats. The oxen were released from their yokes and driven into the water to find their own way across. On the other side, everything was reassembled, with an extra team of beasts to attempt to pull everything up the unyielding bank. Nobody had the temerity to remain in the wagons for this operation. All the passengers naturally elected to follow on foot and to take the less dangerous, primitive boat trip over the river. This operation was identical whether for crossing rivers or mountain ranges. In the course of one of these episodes in another generation, a Mrs Schmitt fell backwards while alighting from her wagon. La Trobe said: '... she lost her recollection, and was in much pain. Some relief was afforded by an application of bukku brandy ...'<sup>28</sup> It is noted that she was not offered a slurp!

Some time later, her husband, another Rev. Schmitt, noticed a crimson flower some distance from the moving vehicle, and he jumped off to gather it for La Trobe's botanical collection. Returning to the wagon, he forgot in his excitement that it was moving. It ran over his foot and he was badly injured. He, too, received the 'Bukku Brandy treatment'. Spare a thought for these hardy travellers at that time!

In the town of Knysna, La Trobe's party was hosted by a certain Mr Rex. Rumour has it that Rex was the illegitimate son of King George III sent out to the Colony to avoid embarrassment to the Crown. He was the perfect host who yearned for intelligent company. The La Trobe party found it difficult to leave this pleasant and interesting man and his home. George Rex suggested that they cross the mountains into the next valley, the Lange Kloof, which would shorten their journey to their next port of call, Uitenhage. They would come to regret this decision. Christian Ignatius described it as the most desolate and difficult terrain of the entire journey.

When they reached the top of the Perdekop, they were treated to the most spectacular view of a range of five parallel ridges of steep rocky hills which they would have to cross – a total distance of about 60 kilometres. Even in a car today, it takes about two and a half hours to cover the distance. It took the La Trobe party some ten days to traverse these steep ridges of rocks formations. They must have thought it would never end. However, they finally reached

this fertile valley which, today, is a great apple-growing area. They came to the farm 'Bellevue' which, in 1815, was owned by the Zondagh family and, to this very day, it still is. Christian Ignatius described the Zondaghs as charming people. The present generation of Zondaghs is no different.

On a personal note, I have experienced a wonderful coincidence with this salt of the earth family. When I opened my dental surgery in Grahamstown, a local attorney had been given a copy of Christian Ignatius La Trobe's book published in 1816. He was related to the Zondaghs and was astounded to meet another La Trobe. He offered to take my family and me to visit 'Bellevue'. There we discovered



Stave of Cradock's Pass  
Collection: Brian La Trobe

the tradition of the Zondaghs who religiously maintained a daily diary for nearly 200 years. It was a simple document but very informative, e.g. 'we sheared sheep today' or 'we pruned the apple trees'. La Trobe's visit in 1816 was fully documented in this diary. I felt deeply honoured when Mr Errol Zondagh asked me to record my visit to the farm in the year 1972. At the time I wrote: 'In 1816 the Zondagh family demonstrated magnificent hospitality to my illustrious ancestor Rev. C. I. La Trobe. This wonderful family tradition still continues in 1972'. On paging carefully through this valuable and interesting set of documents, I happened to notice an entry from 1935: 'an aeroplane flew over the farm today, for the first time'.

The party of Christian Ignatius proceeded along the Lange Kloof in an easterly direction

towards the farm of 'Essenbosch'. As the party was slightly behind schedule, it was decided to travel on after the sun had set. This was a bad mistake. The lead wagon fell into a ditch and overturned, injuring Brother Stein.

La Trobe wrote:

To our great sorrow, we found him much hurt, both in his head and right arm ... He felt faint and stunned with the blow. Our first business, therefore, was to do all in our power to afford him relief ... He was not able to lift his arm ... The bottle of bukku brandy ... was the only medicine he used, from first to last.

The wagon fared better than Bro. Stein and was soon righted. The worst damage was the fracture to the ceramic honey jar which was sorely missed.

They reached the town of Uitenhage where they rested for a few days. They visited the nearby mission station of Bethelsdorp which did not impress or engender any interest in La Trobe. Close by, was Algoa Bay on the Indian Ocean on the Eastern seaboard of Africa. He makes no mention of this Bay which would eventually become the town of Port Elizabeth where the English '1820 settlers' were destined to land', but that was still four years hence. The Magistrate of Uitenhage had suggested that they look at a site near Sunday's River as a possible site for a new mission. Having just crossed this river, Christian Ignatius noticed some elephant dung, which alarmed him greatly. In fact, they were passing through what today is the Addo Game Reserve where large herds of elephant, buffalo and lion roam.

The party went on as far as the Fish River, then retraced their steps all the way back to Genadendal. La Trobe made no mention of Grahamstown where I eventually spent twenty-five years of my professional life, and where Peggy and I raised our four sons. It is the epicentre of all English-speaking South Africans – the '1820 Settlers'. These are people very proud of their heritage, and rightly so. They are justly proud that they were the first English-speaking people to arrive in the Colony, just like those American citizens who all like to think their ancestors arrived from England in the 'Mayflower'. I always poked fun at them by saying that my ancestor, Christian Ignatius La Trobe, beat them to it by four years, arriving under his own steam while they were still breathing the soot of England.

The journey had lasted four months. It could not have been easy for a man of La Trobe's age. There were no roads, only rough tracks. Much of the journey was made on foot, walking behind the wagon, or on horseback. Crossing rivers was a real mission. It says a lot for the physical fitness and stamina of the Rev. Christian Ignatius La Trobe.

On arriving back in Cape Town, Christian Ignatius was asked by Sir Charles Somerset if he would entertain the idea of returning to England in one of His Majesty's Frigates HMS Zebra, instead of by private sailing ship. The Governor wanted someone to watch over his son, Villiers William Henry Plantagenet Somerset, who was returning to England and wished to visit Napoleon, imprisoned on St Helena. La Trobe jumped at the chance as he had a great desire to paint a portrait of the incarcerated Emperor. Before his departure from Cape Town, he made some comment on the negative effects of marijuana, known in South Africa as 'Dacha' or 'hashish'. He was clearly not impressed as he was with the Bukku.

There is in this country a plant called by the Hottentots Dacha, a species of wild hemp, (cicuta). Some of them smoke it like tobacco ... They are exceedingly fond of it. Its effects upon the human body are dreadful. It not only takes away the senses ... even more completely than alcohol, but, by degrees, undermines the constitution ... and makes cripples of those that continue in the practice.<sup>10</sup>

When the Zebra arrived at St Helena, La Trobe jumped off the ship armed with his sketch book and water colours, to seek permission from the Governor to make some drawings of the imprisoned Frenchman. The Governor was amiable but, being in a fit of pique with the British, he refused in typical Gallic fashion. As some form of compensation, La Trobe sketched several landscapes and a portrait of the Governor's wife before finally departing for England. Having sailed from Cape Town on 17 October 1816, his long mission was completed when he arrived at Spithead on 10 December 1816, a little less than a year after he had arrived at the Cape.

Christian Ignatius La Trobe spent his remaining years at Fairfield near Liverpool. His was not an idle retirement since, after some decades, he left a vast legacy of the written word and music, and he helped to collect funds



on an international scale to aid victims of the Napoleonic wars. He died on 8 May 1836. Three of his sons achieved fame in their own right. His eldest son, Peter, followed in his footsteps, becoming a preacher and Secretary to the Moravian Church. The next son, John Antes, was a well-known writer of church music and a canon of Carlisle Cathedral. His third son, Charles Joseph, is well known to you. He became the first Lieutenant Governor of the colony of Victoria, here in Australia.

John Antes has a certain but remote kinship with my son, Andrew. They both went to the same College in Oxford, but about 170 years apart. Andrew was a Rhodes Scholar in 1990. He chose to go to 'Teddy Hall' – St Edmunds College. On one occasion, I asked the Hall Porter if there was any way I could prove the attendance of a student in 1820. He came up with a letter, proving that John Antes had been resident there.

When I was a student at London University many, many moons ago, Peggy and I would take ourselves off as a special treat to 'The George' in Alfriston, Sussex for a weekend's relaxation. Little did we know that the village of Alfriston was but a mile away from where Charles Joseph was buried. These facts only came to light many

years later when I became actively involved in researching the La Trobe family genealogy.

When Andrew was still a student at Oxford, we visited Litlington together to visit Charles Joseph's grave and to see 'Clapham House' where he died. Andrew now lives in Sevenoaks, Kent. A few years ago, it was he who discovered Ightham Mote, another La Trobe residence, and took me there on a visit.

On returning to South Africa, I was intrigued to discover the watercolours which Charles Joseph had painted of the buildings at Ightham Mote after his return from Australia. This valuable piece of historical documentation was part of the doctoral thesis of none other than Dr Dianne Reilly. I feel deeply honoured to have a copy of this prized document. With her permission, I have scanned a couple of Charles Joseph's watercolours of the inner courtyard of Ightham Mote to compare with the photographs I took myself just a few years ago. His paintings displayed remarkable accuracy and great beauty.

Thank you for your kind attention, and for the invitation to address the La Trobe Society on the auspicious occasion of its 10th anniversary here in Melbourne.

- 
- 1 Association Latrobe International Symposium, *Les Latrobes dans le Monde*, ed. Maïté Chevalier, proceedings of the Latrobe International Symposium, Paris, 7-11 May 1997, ALIS, Versailles, France, 1998.
  - 2 Christian Ignatius La Trobe *Journal of a Visit to South Africa in 1815 and 1816*, Facsimile Reprint, Cape Town, C. Struik, 1969, 40.
  - 3 *Ibid.* 54.
  - 4 *Ibid.* 55.
  - 5 *Ibid.* 56-57.
  - 6 *Ibid.* 59.
  - 7 *Ibid.* 76.
  - 8 *Ibid.* 155.
  - 9 *Ibid.* 182-183.
  - 10 *Ibid.* 334.

# A most companionable and lively man:

Christian Ignatius La Trobe (1758-1836)

By Dr Fay Woodhouse

---

Fay Woodhouse is a freelance historian who is commissioned to write a wide range of history and biography. Her latest books include *Leslie Latham: a Biography* (2011), *Vintage Stories: a 150 Year History of Tahbilk*, *Altona Yacht Club: a History of Community Sailing*, *Working for Welfare: a History of the Australian Institute of Welfare and Community Workers* and *A Pedagogue on the Platform: Max Cooke's Life in Music*. She is currently writing the 100 year history of d'Arenberg Wines, and with Peter Yule is working on a history of the Faculty of Law, Monash University. Fay is the Victorian Researcher for the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* and is an Honorary Research Fellow in the School of Historical and Philosophical Studies at the University of Melbourne.

[Christian] Ignatius was a Moravian by upbringing and by training. Music was to play a large part in his life and it was a cause of his religious awakening. This began at school in Fulneck when, as a child of six, he became enchanted by the choir's singing of hymns.<sup>1</sup>

## Family heritage

Of Huguenot descent, Christian Ignatius La Trobe's great-grandfather, French-born Jean La Trobe, joined William of Orange's army and crossed the Irish Sea where he fought in the Battle of the Boyne River in 1690.<sup>2</sup> Invalided out of the Army, he remained in Ireland at Waterford where a substantial Huguenot colony already existed. Jean's son, James La Trobe (1702-1752), a linen manufacturer at Waterford

who was brought up in the Baptist church, joined the Moravian Church, Dublin in 1750. It was from Ireland that James La Trobe's son, Benjamin, wrote to the Moravians in London, anxious to learn from them.<sup>3</sup> The Evangelical-Protestant Moravian Church, revived in Germany in the 1720s by 'a man of extraordinary religious insight', Count von Zinzendorf, founded Christian communities and missions across the globe.<sup>4</sup> Though few in number, their missionary zeal was renowned. The worldwide Church, directed by elders based in Germany, saw the need to be well represented in the 'ever expanding British world' of the eighteenth century. The Church remains 'liturgical in the conduct of its rites', and special emphasis is placed on the use of music in its services.<sup>5</sup>

Benjamin La Trobe (1728-1786), a great evangelistic preacher with a 'precocious ability to attract and hold large crowds', was received into the Moravian Church and ordained in Germany

in 1754. His marriage to Anna Margareta Antes, daughter of the prominent Moravian Henry Antes of Pennsylvania,<sup>6</sup> was an arranged one. The choice of partner was crucially important to the Church: wives were working partners with their husbands.<sup>7</sup> Anna came from a distinguished family and is described as 'a very capable person' in her own right. In February 1758, the first of the couple's five children, Christian Ignatius, was born at Fulneck, the Moravian settlement in Yorkshire.

### ***Education and Vocation***

Christian Ignatius was educated at Fulneck from the age of two while his father was headmaster there. In the meantime, Benjamin and Anna were responsible for representing the Church and its missions to the British. As the Moravian leader in England, Benjamin encouraged the use of music among Moravians.<sup>8</sup> Following Benjamin's death in 1786 at age 57, his obituary stated that he had been 'indefatigable ... in promoting the laudable purpose' of his Church 'at home and abroad'.<sup>9</sup> His influence on the use of music appears to have been long-lasting and, it would seem, influenced his son Christian in his ongoing commitment to his faith.

At the age of thirteen in 1771, Christian Ignatius La Trobe left his home in England to enter the Moravian Theological College at Niesky, Germany. While he attended the College, where the curriculum 'allowed for the development of an individual student's talents', he not only received 'excellent musical instruction', he was introduced to 'works of some great masters'. He also developed an extraordinary skill in playing a wide range of instruments.<sup>10</sup> Historian John Mason proposes that his understanding of the Christian doctrine and his own spiritual growth developed partly through the training he received, but also by learning to accompany hymns to music as an organist. Mason writes that in 1775 when he took communion for the first time, he was so affected by the singing (a massed choir of four hundred voices) that he felt as though he were being 'transported among the saints'. This event, it seems, began a new period of his spiritual life.<sup>11</sup> In 1779, he became a tutor at the College in Germany, only giving up this teaching post in 1784, at the age of 27, to return to London to assist his father. Once back in London, he enjoyed a 'vigorous social life', and as Mason notes, 'living for the first time beyond the confines of a Moravian community, where his every move would have been known'. The contrast must have been enormous as the Church had previously controlled every aspect of his life. In London he sometimes shared lodgings with his brother, Benjamin Henry who had left

the Church, or with a German friend who was not a Moravian. Despite spending time in the company of 'serious-minded men and women', Christian Ignatius was described as 'a most companionable and lively man, [who] seldom needed to dine alone'. Indeed the German with whom he lodged wondered:

how a man of so lively disposition, could belong to a community so recluse and religious, as that of the Church of the Brethren, in which there were so many checks, by particular regulations, against the world and its pleasures and amusements.<sup>12</sup>

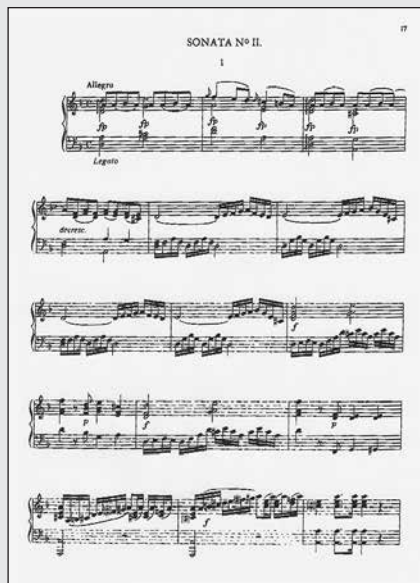
Here we see the two sides Christian Ignatius. Though clearly a pious man who kept company with other pious men, he seems to have achieved a balance between his spiritual life, missionary duties and a rich social and musical life.

Of Benjamin La Trobe's three sons, only Christian Ignatius remained a member of the Church. Although an evangelical denomination such as the Moravians would certainly have desired and anticipated continuity of family faith, not all children of Moravian parents would have shared their parents' faith and dedication.<sup>13</sup> In fact, it was not always certain that Christian Ignatius would remain in the Church. He admits that he grew 'indifferent and worldly' at one time. With his many talents, it would surely have been possible for him to change vocation and become a more 'worldly' man if he chose. If he went through extended periods of indifference and doubt about his calling, any misgivings were resolved. In assessing his life, it is generally accepted by La Trobe scholars that his appointment as Secretary of the Moravian Church in Britain in 1795, was recognition of his true place in the Church: his career as an evangelical missionary lasted forty-one years.<sup>14</sup> He is described by R B M Hutton, historian of the Fulneck School, as not only the finest Moravian preacher of the century, but as one of the greatest Protestant preachers in England.<sup>15</sup>

Christian Ignatius had married Hannah Benigna Syms of Ballinderry, County Tipperary, Ireland in early 1790. Little is known of Hannah except that she was the daughter of a Moravian minister and an assistant among Moravian women at Fulneck who 'emerged as a suitable candidate for him'.<sup>16</sup> While Christian Ignatius, like his father, may have been in no hurry to marry, the arranged marriage proved to be successful.<sup>17</sup> Love and affection grew. He wrote to his friend the music historian, Dr Charles



Burney, to announce his changed status: 'I wished for a sensible house wife (if I must have one at all)... [but] the longer I know my wife, the more... I consider myself rich in possessing her'.<sup>18</sup> Together they had six children, of which Charles Joseph La Trobe was one, and their marriage lasted nearly thirty-five years.



Christian Ignatius La Trobe Sonata for Piano, No.2, Opus 3

### *Influences as a Composer*

It is clear Christian Ignatius La Trobe was a highly educated man; he was also a talented musician and composer. Although he was a clergyman, La Trobe was able to spend a considerable amount of his leisure time composing sacred vocal and instrumental music. He was aware of and bought the music of Haydn, Mozart, Liszt and Pergolesi, all popular musicians of his day

Not long after Franz Josef Haydn (1732-1809) arrived in England in 1790 after the death of his patron, Prince Nikolaus Esterházy, he called on La Trobe at his home. Haydn was a prominent and prolific composer of the Classical period and is often called the 'father of the Symphony' and the 'father of the String Quartet'. He was also instrumental in the development of the piano-trio and the evolution of the Sonata form. A close friendship grew out of this first meeting and La Trobe became a regular visitor at Haydn's home during his two extended visits to England.

In 1791 La Trobe published *Three Sonatas for Piano, Opus III*. As Haydn was still in London at the time, it is thought he had access

to all of Haydn's sonatas at the time. He later recalled that:

the pianoforte, he desired to hear from me. As he observed that they ought to be printed, I agreed if he would permit me to dedicate them to him.

In 1806, La Trobe published the first of six volumes of Church music. His vocal music was performed in Moravian churches during his lifetime, but it was as editor that his fame was extensive. A contemporary reference, *Sainsbury's Dictionary of Musicians*, 1835, stated that: 'His publication, *The Selection of Sacred Music* has... contributed, more perhaps than any other work, to the introduction into this country of a taste for church music of Germany and Italy'.<sup>19</sup> *The Selection of Sacred Music* was an extensive set of six volumes, published over a period of twenty years, which was included in all important music collections of that time.

La Trobe composed vocal works totaling over one hundred independent anthems and solos and around twelve works of cantata or oratorio. Eight of these works are extant in their entirety. Unfortunately, most of La Trobe's instrumental music was never published. The only known published instrumental works are the three piano Sonatas of Opus III and nine organ preludes. Correspondence between Burney and La Trobe reveal that La Trobe planned to dedicate other piano Sonatas to Burney. Clarinet concertos were among other instrumental works composed by La Trobe, but none of these has been preserved.<sup>20</sup>

### *Christian Ignatius La Trobe's Music and Melbourne*

Today, most of La Trobe's works exist in various manuscript collections in libraries and museums in the United States, Great Britain and Germany. A copy of the *Three Sonatas for Piano Opus III* was obtained by the State Library of Victoria from Dr Brian La Trobe in South Africa who, in turn, had received a copy from Charles 'Sandy' Latrobe who had discovered it in the Peabody Institute at the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. There is another copy held in the British Library.

In 2002, the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) established an Artists-in-Residence program with the Melbourne piano quartet, the Team of Pianists, at the Trust's 1857 mansion, *Glenfern*, in East St Kilda. The property was, at that stage, managed by La Trobe Society founding member, Richard Heathcote. At the request of the La Trobe Society, Team of Pianists

member Rohan Murray included the Sonatas in a Soirée Musicale at *Glenfern* in October 2002. After completing his Master of Music (Performance) degree with First Class Honours, Rohan undertook a PhD at the Victorian College of the Arts, becoming the VCA's first PhD candidate. As Max Cooke, who established the Team of Pianists in 1983 has recently written, playing music in heritage venues gives added impact to the music. He also sees great importance in being able to keep alive traditions 'from the highest moments of the art'.<sup>21</sup>

In May 2011, La Trobe's third *Sonata for Piano Opus III*, was played once again for the members and friends of the La Trobe Society. On this occasion the Soirée Musicale was held at the Lyceum Club, Melbourne, and the young Indonesian pianist, Kevin Kanisius Suherman, played with great skill and expertise. To provide a context to the La Trobe *Sonatas*, he also played Beethoven's *Piano Sonata Opus 27 No. 1*, Chopin's *Andante Spianato and Polonaise* and Liszt's *La Campanella*.

Christian Ignatius La Trobe was a man of faith; he was also a man of lively disposition, intelligence and musical talent. From the highest moments of his art, he created sacred vocal and instrumental music. La Trobe's music has now survived for 220 years. Some of his pieces, such as the *Three Sonatas for Piano Opus III*, are not played frequently as solo piano performances. His work is not as familiar to us or as popular as the music of Beethoven, Haydn, Mozart, Liszt, Pergolesi or the many other composers from the Classical era.

During the 1820s, Christian Ignatius lost the use of his right arm which meant he was unable to devote 'all those talents, which God has been pleased to bestow upon me, to his service'. His son Peter then assisted him in his work. In 1834 he retired to Fairfield, the Moravian settlement in Lancashire where he died on 6 May 1836 at the age of 78. The settlement's diary on that day praised the man and recorded his passing: 'The Lord raised him up among us as an eminent instrument for his work'.<sup>22</sup>

- 
- 1 John Mason, 'Benjamin and Christian Ignatius La Trobe in the Moravian Church, *The La Trobe Journal*, No 71, Autumn 2003, p. 20.
  - 2 Dianne Reilly Drury, *La Trobe The Making of a Governor*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 2006, p. 14.
  - 3 Mason, op.cit., p. 18.
  - 4 *ibid.*, p. 17.
  - 5 Reilly Drury, op.cit., p. 17.
  - 6 Reilly Drury, op.cit., p. 18.
  - 7 Mason, op.cit., p. 18.
  - 8 Reilly Drury, op.cit., p. 18.
  - 9 Mason, op.cit., p. 19.
  - 10 Reilly Drury, op.cit., p. 18; Mason, op.cit., p. 20.
  - 11 Mason, op.cit., p. 21.
  - 12 Mason, op.cit., p. 21.
  - 13 Mason, op.cit., p. 18.
  - 14 Charles Stevens, *Christian Ignatius La Trobe 1758-1836*, East Carolina University, Greenville, N.C., n.d., n.p., quoted in Reilly Drury, op.cit., p. 19. See Mason, pp. 18-23.
  - 15 R B M Hutton, *Through Two Centuries: An Account of the Origin and Growth of Fulneck School, 1753-1953*, School of Bicentenary Committee, Fulneck, Yorkshire, 1953, quoted in Reilly Drury, *ibid.*, p. 19.
  - 16 Mason, op.cit., p. 24.
  - 17 Reilly Drury, op.cit., p. 19; Mason, *ibid.*, p. 24.
  - 18 Mason, op.cit., p. 24.
  - 19 Charles Stevens, *Christian Ignatius Latrobe (1758-1836)*, op. cit.
  - 20 *ibid.*
  - 21 Max Cooke & Fay Woodhouse, *A Pedagogue on the Platform: Max Cooke's Life in Music*, Melbourne 2010, p. 201.
  - 22 Mason, op.cit., p. 26.

**References:**

- Cooke, Max & Woodhouse, Fay, *A Pedagogue on the Platform: Max Cooke's Life in Music*, Melbourne 2010.
- Hutton, R B M, *Through Two Centuries: An Account of the Origin and Growth of Fulneck School, 1753-1953*, School of Bicentenary Committee, Fulneck, Yorkshire, 1953
- Mason, John, 'Benjamin and Christian Ignatius La Trobe in the Moravian Church, *The La Trobe Journal*, No 71, Autumn 2003.
- Reilly Drury, Dianne, *Charles Joseph La Trobe: the Making of a Governor*, Melbourne University Press, 2006.
- Stevens, Charles, *Christian Ignatius Latrobe (1758-1836)*, East Carolina University, Greenville, N.C., n.d.

# Resplendent Lights of Publicity and Despicable Journals: the Early Newspapers of the Port Phillip District

By Tim Hogan

---

**Tim Hogan has worked at the State Library of Victoria since 1997. He was Newspaper Collection Librarian from November 2003 to February 2011, and has recently been appointed Australian History and Literature Collections Librarian. Tim received a staff fellowship at the State Library in 2007 to research the history of Victoria's newspapers. He is currently researching the radical and political newspapers of Victoria.**

In 1883 a prominent Australian newspaper editor and observer on Australian life wrote of Australia, and Melbourne in particular, that, 'this is the land of newspapers', and further that 'the proportion of the population that subscribe to newspapers is ten times as large as in England'. He noted that in Victoria alone there were over 200 different newspapers produced. 'If there is one institution of which Australians have reason to be proud, it is their newspaper press. Almost without exception it is thoroughly respectable and well-conducted'. Melbourne was, in the view of this observer, the only city which could claim to be a literary centre, one which attracted the most able and clever men in literature and journalism.<sup>1</sup> While some allowance for self-promotion and colonial patriotism must be allowed for in this commentary there is no doubt that the state of the newspaper industry in Victoria at this time was prosperous, extensive and confident.

It is interesting and instructive then to examine the origins of this 'land of newspapers', and 'literary centre' that was Melbourne, for they are very primitive indeed. The *Melbourne Advertiser*, the first newspaper in Victoria, was first published on 1 January 1838. This was a mere two and half years after the arrival of the first European settlers in Melbourne. It was published and edited by the redoubtable John Pascoe Fawkner who claimed in the first issue:

We do opine that Melbourne cannot reasonably remain longer marked on the chart of advancing civilization without its Advertiser. Such being our imperial Fiat we do intend to throw the resplendent light of Publicity upon all the affairs of this New Colony.<sup>2</sup>

The means used to throw this 'resplendent light of publicity' upon the affairs of Port Phillip was a handwritten (manuscript) newspaper. It was written by Fawkner himself; the calligraphy was, according to the chronicler of early Melbourne Edmund Finn, aka 'Garryowen', 'the most creditable part of the affair'. Its circulation was estimated to be no more than 30 copies.<sup>3</sup> Aside from the absence of a printing press Fawkner had not obtained a licence from the governing authorities in New South Wales to publish his newspaper. Repressive legislation introduced by Governor Darling in 1827 placed many restrictions on newspaper publishers. One of these required the lodgement of documents and fees of over £300 with the authorities in Sydney. Fawkner was not a man to be deterred easily and after being denied exemption from these requirements he went ahead and published his newspaper before the paperwork arrived in Sydney. Firstly, it was in manuscript form. Then, in early March 1838, after 10 handwritten issues, it was as a printed edition.

Why a manuscript edition? Fawkner had a printing press in Tasmania from his previous ventures in newspapers there. Why not simply wait until this was delivered? The opportunity to advertise his own commercial interests, and to collect money from subscribers, would have been factors, but perhaps more than this was Fawkner's personality, ego and keen sense of history which drove him to produce the first newspaper, albeit one in a very primitive form.<sup>4</sup> To these reasons I would add that a mechanism for disseminating information, whether political, commercial, or social, had become essential in the growing settlement of Melbourne and district, and that Fawkner, energetic and impatient by nature, exploited this opportunity at the earliest possible moment. The *Advertiser*, humble, and in the words of Garryowen 'a miserable rag',<sup>5</sup> did at least provide the inhabitants of Melbourne with a basic composition of news, advertising and public notices. Unfortunately for Fawkner the forces of authority prevailed and he was eventually forced to cease publication of the *Advertiser* on 23 April 1838. He would return to publishing in 1839 with another newspaper, but only after the law regulating newspapers in New South Wales had been amended, to make it easier for publishers in far away Port Phillip, to lodge the necessary paperwork and fees with the authorities in Sydney.

It was not long after this that the second Victorian newspaper appeared. This was the *Port Phillip Gazette* edited by George Arden and printed by Thomas Strode, which began on 27 October 1838. This was a printed and legal newspaper from the start. The proprietors had obtained a licence in Sydney before travelling

to Port Phillip. The *Gazette* proclaimed an optimistic outlook for the infant settlement of Melbourne and the Port Phillip district:

Two years have scarcely elapsed since the site of Melbourne was a wilderness, the echo of the woods answering only to the shrill coo-ee of the savage, or the long wild howl of its native dogs; now the sounds of a busy population, the noise of the hammer and saw knows scarce a moment's cessation, the ground has been cleared, and houses like mushroom are every day springing up<sup>6</sup>

The leader also informed its readers that commentary upon political matters would be held in abeyance as it did not seem reasonable to take such an interest in so infant a colony. Such restraint was to be short-lived. During the early part of 1839 the *Gazette* had already advocated a greater share of revenue for Port Phillip from the government in Sydney and was advocating independence for Australia Felix.<sup>7</sup> The *Port Phillip Gazette* was to have an eventful existence sputtering through a succession of financial and legal crises until it finally ceased in the early 1850s. Its early years, in particular, when Arden was editor, saw a number of libel cases brought against the *Gazette*, most notably by the senior Resident Judge in the Port Phillip District, Judge Willis. Arden was well educated but outspoken and passionate in expressing his views. Sometimes, this was to a point of recklessness, once allowing himself to participate in a duel with one of his critics.<sup>8</sup>

John Pascoe Fawkner re-entered the newspaper business with the *Port Phillip Patriot and Melbourne Advertiser* on 6 February 1839. The *Patriot* was less literary in style than the *Gazette* but was said to present more variety of facts.<sup>9</sup> In today's terminology it might be considered more tabloid than broadsheet. Its prose style was considered racy, spicy and colourful, especially in reportage of court cases.<sup>10</sup> In addition to the spice the *Patriot* was outspoken in its support for small business owners and land holders, and from the outset was a strong advocate for the rights and independence of the Port Phillip district.

Before too long, a third newspaper, the *Port Phillip Herald*, founded by George Cavenagh entered the market on 3 January 1840. This was the forerunner of the *Melbourne Herald* and lives on today as the *Herald-Sun*. George Cavenagh, the son of an army major who served in the British Army in India, immigrated to Sydney in about 1825. After working as a



**William Strutt, 1825–1915, artist**  
**J.P. Fawkner, Esq., M.L.C., 1792–1869**  
 Oil on canvas  
 La Trobe Pictures Collection, State Library  
 of Victoria, H15375

law clerk and briefly as a deliverer of milk, he entered the newspaper industry. In 1836, he began publishing the *Sydney Gazette*. When he arrived in Melbourne Cavenagh was therefore an experienced newspaper proprietor and the *Herald* quickly established itself as a profitable concern.<sup>11</sup> Like most newspapers at the time its opening editorial was full of lofty sentiments about the independence and fearlessness of the press:

Unfettered by obligations to any partner here or elsewhere, we shall studiously endeavour to promote the best interest both sacred and civil of 'the land we live in'. We propose making it a rule as far as practicable to deal not with men but with measures.<sup>12</sup>

While each of these publications proclaimed to uphold the highest standards of impartiality, truthfulness, fearlessness, accuracy, and numerous other noble sentiments the press commonly hold dear, these virtues were not seen by some observers. Lady Jane Franklin, wife of the Governor of Van Diemen's Land Sir John Franklin, after a brief visit to Melbourne in 1839, observed in her diary that the *Port Phillip Patriot* was 'wretchedly printed'; the *Port Phillip Gazette* she considered better presented but the editor, George Arden, she considered bigoted and wrote whatever took his fancy, and she disapproved of the fact that he had taken a

great dislike to Captain Lonsdale.<sup>13</sup> It was not just in good society that there were qualms about the quality of the press. Charles La Trobe, Superintendent of the Port Phillip District, in a report to Governor Fitzroy, written in January 1848, made comment on most of the local press:

The general style, tone and character of the Port Phillip press has been hitherto as discreditable to the District, as the little influence which it may have exercised at home or abroad has been decidedly injurious. In plain words, ignorance, disregard of truth and a reckless and studied spirit of misrepresentation, often amounting to the most malevolent libel, have been hitherto more or less the distinguishing characteristics of all the principal papers of Port Phillip, whether under their present or past management

On the *Port Phillip Patriot and Melbourne Advertiser* he observed, 'it systematically deals in abuse and gross misrepresentation of persons and facts'. About the *Port Phillip Gazette and Settlers Journal*, after the period of Arden's editorship, 'it seems to possess no distinctive principles or characters'. On the *Port Phillip Herald* he was a little kinder, 'although without talent or fixed principles, is upon the whole more decently conducted; and is admitted into houses where other local papers are excluded'. The *Geelong Advertiser*, already with a reputation as a gentleman's paper, received some mild praise where he notes it, 'contained more useful matter and to be more creditably and decently conducted than any other paper in this District'. Not everything La Trobe had to say was bad about the Port Phillip press and he did recognize that the inhabitants of this underdeveloped settlement were happy enough with a bad press rather than no press. La Trobe also provides a useful summary of the main concerns of the Port Phillip press, which included resistance to 'exile' labour and convict transportation, advocacy of immigration, and political and financial separation from NSW.<sup>14</sup>

If La Trobe's comments seem very critical they are mild in comparison to the commentary the editors dished out to their rivals. In the small community of Melbourne at this time, competition between the three newspapers was intense and personal. The period during March and April 1840 provides plenty of examples. George Arden, of the *Gazette*, wrote



in late March 1840 of the *Port Phillip Herald* as, 'a production so thoroughly imbued with the low impertinence of a vulgar mind'.

Its editor, George Cavenagh, was described as 'venal' and continually derided as 'formerly a milkman in Sydney'. Not relenting in 1841, Arden wrote of Cavenagh as a 'dirty creature' which was, 'busy plastering his leprosy with the exuberant terms of rhetorical sophisms'. Cavenagh in reply to some of these attacks dubbed the *Gazette* as, 'this contemptible rag'.<sup>15</sup>

Fawkner, in the *Patriot*, could not let comments such as these go unremarked upon and accused George Cavenagh of being the editor of, 'the most intolerant, bigoted, and lyingly [sic] censorious journal in the Colonies'. Arden, in turn, did not ignore the *Patriot*, complimenting it as, 'an old woman whose low and impudent vulgarity would do no disgrace to the forensic abilities of a Billingsgate fish-hag'.<sup>16</sup> This verbal war of invective went on for several years and its reflection of the fictional newspaper wars in Dicken's *Pickwick Papers* was uncanny and curious, as a contemporary reader, Louisa Meredith observed.<sup>17</sup> From these observations one imagines reporters from the rival papers at fisticuffs in the streets of Melbourne. Happily, Edmund Finn, an early reporter for the *Herald*, recalls that relations between reporters were competitive but cordial.<sup>18</sup>

Whatever the editors may have expressed about each others publications there seemed to be a market for each of these journals for several years. In less than five years since the settlement of Melbourne and with a population of a little over 10,000 this frontier town was graced with three different newspapers, each one producing a profit. By June 1846 a new publication appeared. This was the *Melbourne Argus*, which began as a radical, progressive journal under the editorship of William Kerr. La Trobe's view of the *Melbourne Argus* under Kerr's editorship was:

The violent and disgraceful party spirit that has sprung up in Melbourne [a reference to sectarian conflicts and local council election conflicts], although it may not have originated with the editor [Kerr] of this paper, has nevertheless mainly been kept alive by his publications, and the general tone of the *Argus* under his management is quite as discreditable as that which distinguished the *Patriot* newspaper, formerly under his control.<sup>19</sup>

In late 1848, Edward Wilson, in partnership with J. S. Johnston, took over the *Melbourne Argus* and through astute management built the renamed '*Argus*' into the largest and most profitable newspaper in the colony. But if La Trobe, who found most of the press 'discreditable' in 1848, was expecting any change in character he was to be disappointed. In Wilson he was to find a critic like no other. One of La Trobe's inadequacies according to his critics was his timid advocacy for a better deal from the government in Sydney, and his failure to advance the cause for separation of the Port Phillip District from New South Wales. These criticisms were often made in the harshest of terms with La Trobe's administration described as, 'utterly indefensible', and his actions as of being a 'traitor to the community'.<sup>20</sup> There was sometimes praise for his actions, particularly his opposition to convict labour for Victoria, but mostly it was a continual stream of criticism in the press for La Trobe.<sup>21</sup>

The strong press criticism which had been building since the late 1840s reached an almost farcical crescendo in the early months of 1853 when the *Argus* regularly ran a column headed, 'Wanted a Governor'. An item from 2 March 1853 is fairly typical. After outlining the need for a, 'real Governor', it asserts that, 'the appointment of one even reasonably honest and able man to that post, would in a month remove nineteen twentieths of the evils by which we are surrounded'.<sup>22</sup> Prominent critics such as John Pascoe Fawkner were given ample space to document the case against La Trobe.<sup>23</sup> The controversy in the pages of the *Argus* only added to its increasing prominence and prosperity. By the early 1850s, exploiting the gold boom with great skill, it quickly came to dominate the newspaper market by absorbing, or forcing out of business, many of its competitors.

The 1840s had seen a number of other newspapers emerge in the district. Some of these, like the *Geelong Advertiser*, founded in 1840, and others in Portland and Port Fairy were to succeed. But the competition in Melbourne was tough and papers such as the *Melbourne Times*, 1842-1843, *Melbourne Courier*, 1844-1846, the *Standard and Port Phillip Gazetteer*, 1844-1845, *Observer*, 1848-1849 and the *Albion*, 1847-1848, all failed to survive, as did the pioneering efforts of Fawkner with the *Port Phillip Patriot*, and Arden's *Port Phillip Gazette*. Some of these papers offered different views. The *Melbourne Times*, for example, presented itself as a, 'journal suited to the means of the labouring classes'.<sup>24</sup> Others were produced for a specific audience like the *Port Phillip Christian Herald* (1846), or the *Illustrated Australian Magazine* (1850). The failure of some of these papers to survive did

dilute the plurality of opinion in Victoria at this time. But the concentration of papers in Melbourne into a few large ones was probably inevitable as the colony continued to grow, especially after the gold discoveries. The era, when small scale operators with little capital could start a newspaper in the metropolis and survive for a period of time, without the threat of overwhelming competition from giants such as the *Argus* and later the *Age*, had passed. The colour, individuality and libellous nature of the early press was replaced by a more professional and sober outlook, although one which still contained a tradition of liberalism and strong support for the growth of democratic institutions for society.

By May 1854, at the end of La Trobe's period as Governor of Victoria, there had been over 40 newspapers produced. Most of these had not survived, but in mid 1854 Melbourne was served by two daily newspapers, with a third, the *Age*, soon to begin in October 1854. In other regions there were newspapers in the long settled western towns of Geelong, Port Fairy, Portland and Warrnambool, and the new gold districts of Ballarat, Bendigo, and Castlemaine. With the onset of the gold rush Victoria was well on the way to becoming 'the land of newspapers'.

- 
- 1 Twopeny, R. E. N., *Town Life in Australia*. University Press, Sydney, 1973, pp. 221-223.
  - 2 Melbourne Advertiser, 1 January, 1838, p. 2.
  - 3 Finn, Edmund (Garryowen), *The Chronicles of Early Melbourne, 1835 to 1852: Historical, Anecdotal and Personal*. Vol. 2, Heritage Publications, Melbourne, 1976, p. 820.
  - 4 Hubber, Brian 'The Fawcner Printing Press: A Provenance Study', *La Trobe Journal*, No. 57, Autumn, 1996, p. 15.
  - 5 Finn, Edmund (Garryowen), *The Chronicles*, Vol. 2, p. 820.
  - 6 Port Phillip Gazette, 27 October, 1838.
  - 7 Port Phillip Gazette, 9 February, 1839, and 4 May, 1839.
  - 8 Melbourne Advertiser, 3 June, 1839, p.3.
  - 9 Finn, Edmund, *The Chronicles*, Vol. 2, p. 827.
  - 10 Work, T. L. 'The Early Printers of Melbourne, 1838 to 1858', *The Australasian Typographical Journal*, Vol. 28, No. 330, December 1897, p.1; Bonwick, James, *Early Struggles of the Australian Press*. Melbourne, Gordon & Gotch, 1890, p. 62.
  - 11 Tipping, Marjorie J., 'George Cavenagh', in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. Vol. 1. Melbourne University Press, 1966, pp. 216-217. <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A010201b.htm>.
  - 12 Port Phillip Herald, 3 January, 1840, p. 2.
  - 13 Franklin, Jane, *This Errant Lady: Jane Franklin's Overland Journey to Port Phillip and Sydney, 1839*. Penny Russell, (ed), National Library of Australia, Canberra, 2002, p. 214.

Cont. over >>

- 14 Historical Records of Australia. Series I, Vol. 26, pp.170-172. <http://archiver.rootsweb.ancestry.com/th/read/AUS-PT-JACKSON-CONVICTS/2007-06/1180916151>
- 15 Bonwick, James, *Early Struggles of the Australian Press*, Melbourne, Gordon & Gotch, 1890, p. 59, p.64; Finn, Edmund (Garryowen), *The Chronicles*. Vol. 2, pp-828-829; *Port Phillip Herald*, 3 April, 1841.
- 16 Edmund (Garryowen), *The Chronicles*. Vol .2, pp-828-829
- 17 Meredith, Louisa, *Notes and Sketches of New South Wales during a residence in that Colony from 1839 to 1844*. Ure Smith, Sydney, 1973, pp. 54-55.
- 18 Finn, Edmund, *The Chronicles*. Vol. 2 . p.821.
- 19 Historical Records of Australia. Series I, Vol. 26, p171. <http://archiver.rootsweb.ancestry.com/th/read/AUS-PT-JACKSON-CONVICTS/2007-06/1180916151>
- 20 'Removal of Mr La Trobe', *Argus*, 7 July, 1848, p.2. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-page175206>; 'Separation', *Argus*, 24 November, 1848, p.2. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-page180875>
- 21 'Vandemonian Pollution', *Argus*, 4 July, 1849, p.2. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-page503392>
- 22 'Wanted a Governor', *Argus*, 2 March, 1853, p.5. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-page508468>
- 23 'To the Public of Victoria', *Argus*, 16 April 1853, p.9. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-page508901>
- 24 *Melbourne Times*, 9 April, 1842, p.2.



# Winemaking in central Victoria: the pre-history of Tahbilk

By Fay Woodhouse

The family owned winery known variously as Tabilk Vineyard, Chateau Tahbilk and from 2000 simply as Tahbilk,<sup>1</sup> celebrated 150 years of continuous winemaking in 2010. This winery has a fascinating history and one that begins only twenty-two years after the Port Phillip District was settled. This article briefly sets out its fascinating history, part of which occurred during Charles Joseph La Trobe's time in Port Phillip.

From 1824 when Europeans first blazed their trails into the Goulburn River region, the Taungurong and the Ngurai-illum-wurrung people occupied the region.<sup>2</sup> Oral tradition has it that the country around the Goulburn River was known by the tribes as 'tabilk tabilk' meaning 'place of many waterholes'.<sup>3</sup> When the area was surveyed in 1838 it was named the County of Tabilk; the first pastoral run was named Tabilk and when it was formed, the first vineyard in the region, the Tabilk Vineyard Proprietary also took an Aboriginal name. The Aboriginal people lived in delicate balance with their landscape so the eventual intrusion of Europeans into their lands, while initially met with curiosity, eventually turned to hostility.



The iconic Pagoda style Tower  
at Tahbilk, built 1882-83.  
Tahbilk Archive

In 1824-25,<sup>4</sup> the explorers and adventurers, Hamilton Hume and William Hovell, travelled overland from New South Wales on an official exploration of the Port Phillip District's hinterland. Although they reported favourably on what they saw, ten years elapsed before

further forays into the southern portion of the colony were undertaken. The next expeditions sought unexplored lands to satisfy the needs of the expanding pastoral industry. Much has already been written about the illegal settlement of the Port Phillip District by Charles Henty, John Pascoe Fawkner and John Batman in 1834 and 1835, so it is unnecessary to retell the story here. Suffice to say, due to the illegal settlement and pressure on the colonial government, on 9 September 1836, the Governor of New South Wales, Sir Richard Bourke, authorised the opening up of the Port Phillip District.<sup>5</sup> During his visit to Port Phillip in 1837, Bourke named the settlement 'Melbourne' after Britain's Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne. In its earliest years it had been known as 'Bearbrass', or simply, 'the settlement'.<sup>6</sup>

During the unusually wet winter of 1835–36, Major (later Sir) Thomas Livingstone Mitchell<sup>7</sup> explored the Port Phillip District; describing the land south of the Murray River as a rich *Australia Felix*, offering the hope of abundant grasslands for pastoralists. The place at which Major Mitchell's party crossed the Goulburn later became known as the Major's Crossing or Old Crossing Place. Future overlanders crossed there and rested overnight, aided by John Clarke's Punt and accommodation at the *Travellers Rest*. Clarke was the first person outside Melbourne to obtain 'a licence for a House of Entertainment' and his *Travellers Rest* is believed to be the first hotel in Victoria north of the Great Dividing Range. The site is now part of the Tahbilk Winery. Mitchell's return journey in heavily loaded bullock drays left a clearly-defined track. This soon became known as 'the Major's Line' and survived for years to guide the stream of overlanders entering Victoria from the north.<sup>8</sup> Just as Mitchell had found the landscape enticing, the terrain around the Goulburn was later described by the explorer Joseph Tice Gellibrand as 'an open flat champagne [*sic*] country with abundance of Verdue and well watered'.<sup>9</sup>

### ***Winemaking in Victoria in the 1840s and 1850s***

Wine grapes were planted in Australia as early as 1788. Seeds of the 'claret' grape, so we are told, and several rooted vines, were amongst the many shrubs and plants carried by the eleven ships of the First Fleet to New South Wales; they were planted with enthusiasm by Captain Arthur Phillip in Sydney Cove within a few days of his arrival.<sup>10</sup> Lieutenant John Macarthur, who had arrived on the Second Fleet, pioneered the wool and later the wine industry. Macarthur's son William became one of two authorities on the vine in Australia; he published *Letters on the*



**Unknown photographer**  
**Hugh Glass (1817-71),**  
**speculator and pastoralist**  
 Herald & Weekly Times Portrait  
 Collection, State Library of Victoria.  
 H38849/1601.

*Culture of the Vine.* Men like Macarthur were well educated Englishmen who had travelled Europe; they knew the wine-growing regions of France, Germany and Italy and saw the possibilities for wine in Australia. The Englishman, James Busby (1801-1871), who arrived in Australia in 1824, is acknowledged as the founder of the wine industry as we know it today. He had previously studied viticulture in France and had written *A Treatise on the Culture of the Vine and the Art of Making Wine*, which was published in Sydney in 1825. Busby's enthusiasm bordered on evangelism and his contribution to the knowledge and understanding of wine was vast. Busby's second book, *A Manual of Plain Directions for Planting and Cultivating Vineyards and for Making Wine*, provided exacting instructions and the benefit of his experience for would-be colonial winemakers. As European and British immigrants arrived in the colonies of Australia, some of them planted vines where they settled. For example, the Ryrie brothers who had overlanded from the Monaro in New South Wales, settled at Yering in the Yarra Valley and planted vines in 1838. Others settled in the Geelong district and planted vines there.

Soon after the arrival in Port Phillip of Charles and Sophie La Trobe in 1839, large numbers of Swiss vigneron and vine-dressers migrated to Victoria. Indeed, it took La Trobe by surprise. In 1840 he wrote to James Macarthur in Sydney that:

Some months ago 3 of the good Neuchâtelois, seduced by the knowledge that we were here (Neuchâtel is Mrs

La Trobe's native town) came out to cultivate the vine here, with the purpose of engaging a large number of their fellows to follow in case they found the prospects favourable. The country and climate they find everything they could wish ...

In 1844, eleven men from the Canton of Neuchâtel departed for Australia, eventually settling near Geelong. In the 1840s, both German and Swiss settlers planted vines in the Geelong district.<sup>11</sup>



What then was it that convinced the English farmer turned merchant, John Bear, to try his hand at winemaking? Born in 1798 in Kenton, Devon, Bear and his wife Annabelle (née Hutchings) and their three children, John Pinney; Thomas Hutchings and Ellen Ann, left Devon for Australia in 1841. Together with Captain William Dunsford and his family, they chartered a ship in London and with servants and livestock, they arrived at Williamstown on 20 October, eager to make money and create a new life in the colonies. They found that Melbourne offered unlimited potential for people with drive, initiative and money – all of which the Bears had. Initially, John Pinney Bear and his father set up Bear's Horse Bazaar on the corner of Bourke and Exhibition Streets, part of the Eastern Market. They later formed Bear & Son, stock and station agents, commission agents and auctioneers, providing services to many of the important pastoralists and speculators such as Thomas Austin and John Fawkner.

With financial resources and rapid prosperity, John Bear senior purchased the 'New Leicester' Run in the vicinity of what is now the Yan Yean Reservoir on the Plenty River. He also purchased Portion 20 of the Parish of Yan Yean in 1841, where, on five acres, he planted an orchard and the Castle Hill vineyard. In 1847, Bear gave the merchant William Westgarth, a few bottles of 'still champagne', grown on the five

acres on the Plenty River.<sup>12</sup> Thomas Hutchings Bear ran the Plenty property, vineyard and stock. He experimented with winemaking, undoubtedly instructed via Busby's two manuals on winemaking. John and Thomas Bear became deeply involved in the fledgling wine industry in Victoria. When John Bear senior died in Melbourne in 1851, aged 53, John and Thomas Bear took over their father's estate and wine interests which remained in the family until the first decades of the 20th century.

### ***The Tabilk pastoral run and the Tabilk Vineyard Proprietary***

Frederick Manton, the first squatter who was granted leasehold of around 44,000 acres on the Goulburn River, named his station Noorilim in 1840.<sup>13</sup> He also held the leasehold to another property on the Goulburn which he named the Old Crossing Place. This was later subdivided and renamed Tabilk.<sup>14</sup> However, Manton became insolvent in 1842; the property changed hands twice and by 1854 Tabilk was held by John Purcell and Victoria's largest landholder, Hugh Glass. In 1856 Glass purchased the 640 acre Pre-Emptive Right at the price of £1/- per acre. Soon after his purchase, he employed Frenchman, Ludovic Marie as his estate manager. Marie planted the first grapevines around the homestead in 1856.

The second wave of Victorian winemaking began after the goldrushes in the late 1850s when 'liquid gold' was to be found in the soil.<sup>15</sup> Two unlikely people – the English poet Richard Horne and the Frenchman Ludovic Marie – saw the potential for a Victorian wine industry and were keen to become vigneron. Buoyed by the optimism of the time, together with Andrew Sinclair then the owner of *Noorilim* – they sallied forth with their enthusiasm, ambition and ideas, and devised a scheme to plant a vineyard. Their plan was simple: Sinclair would sell his land to a company which would plant vines. The venture needed men with money and by early 1860 they looked as if they had achieved their goal. The arrangement was short-lived: Andrew Sinclair – a man of dubious character and a drunkard – was found dead on the beach at Brighton three weeks after their plan was launched. The plan had to be revised.

Marie and Horne then presented their scheme to Glass and two of his business associates, the brothers John and Thomas Bear. Glass sold his Pre-Emptive Right – the *Tabilk* run – to the Bear brothers and a handful of investors at a huge profit. Located close to *Noorilim* on the banks of the Goulburn River, the Tabilk Vineyard Proprietary was born. To make wine the company needed vines – an advertisement

was placed in local papers and of the cuttings received 700,000 took root. By the end of the first year, 150 acres had been cleared and sixty-five acres of vines planted. The first vintage was produced in 1860 from the vines Ludovic Marie had planted around the homestead.<sup>16</sup>

The first fifteen years of Tabilk Vineyard's history can best be characterised as years of blood, sweat and tears. Sinclair, desperate to sell his land for a winery, died in the pursuit of the sale. Horne and Marie, the instigators of the venture, satisfied their desire for a vineyard, worked hard and left it to the Bear brothers to make it work. Ludovic Marie left Tabilk in 1862; subsequent early winemakers were James Blake, Leopold Quentin de Soyres and William Ford, all of whom celebrated their achievements, experienced disappointment or greater ambition and moved on. As its sole owner from 1875, John Pinney Bear saw life at the Tabilk Vineyard and estate as one of harmony, and the benefits of winemaking and wine drinking having a civilising effect on the population – a 19th century enlightenment view. He also acknowledged the significance the vineyard played in the development of the wine industry in Victoria. Under Bear's stewardship, and despite being an absentee landlord – he had retired to England in 1878 – he presided over the period that has become known as the 'First

Golden Age' of winemaking both in Victoria and at Chateau Tahbilk. His appointment of the amiable Frenchman, François Coueslant in 1877 resulted in two major initiatives: the vineyards name was changed to 'Chateau Tahbilk' in 1877 to reflect its essentially European background; and he was the designer of the iconic pagoda style tower, built on the property between 1882 and 1883. Under his guidance Tahbilk won many awards at international exhibitions and at the Melbourne International Exhibition of 1880-81.

The period of prolific production with Coueslant as winemaker held Chateau Tahbilk in good stead for the rocky times ahead. Bear, who had embraced winemaking in Victoria and promoted Victorian wines both in Australia and overseas, died unexpectedly during a return visit to Chateau Tahbilk in 1889. His family returned to England and the winery suffered from an absentee landlord until it was purchased in 1925 by Reginald Purbrick. The entire Tahbilk story is told in *Vintage Stories: a 150 Year History of Tahbilk*.<sup>17</sup>

---

## References

- Annear, Robyn, *Bearbrass: Imagining Early Melbourne*, Black Ink, Melbourne, 2005.
- Baker, D W A, 'Mitchell, Sir Thomas Livingstone (1792—1855)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 2, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1967.
- Barwick, D, 'Mapping the past: an atlas of Victorian clans 1835-1904', *Aboriginal History*, 1984.
- Beeston, John, *A Concise History of Australian Wine*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, 2001.
- Billis & Kenyon, *Pastoral Pioneers of Port Phillip*, Macmillan, Melbourne, 1932.
- Bride, Thomas Francis (ed.), *Letters from Victorian Pioneers*, Lloyd O'Neil Pty Ltd, South Yarra, 1983.
- Cabena, P, McRae H, & Bladin, E, *The Lands Manual : a finding guide to Victorian lands records 1836-1983*, Royal Historical Society of Victoria, Melbourne, 1992.
- Clark, Ian D & Hayden, Toby, *Aboriginal Place Names*, n.d.
- Clark, J I, *Aboriginal languages and clans: an historical atlas of western and central Victoria, 1800-1900*, Monash Publications in Geography, 1990.
- Dunstan, David, *Better than Pomard*, Australian Scholarly Press, Kew, 1994.
- Faith, Nicholas, *Liquid Gold: The Story of Australian Wine and its Makers*, Pan Macmillan, Sydney, 2002.
- Garden, D, *Victoria A History*, Nelson, Melbourne, 1984.
- Hewitt, Geoff, *Bayunga Wata: An Archaeology of the Goulburn River*, Strathbogie Shire, Wandong, 2000.
- Hume, Stuart H, 'Hume, Hamilton (1797—1873)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 1, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1966.

- James, P C, 'Gellibrand, Joseph Tice (1792?—1837)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 1, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1966.
- Jose, A W and Carter, W J, *The Australian Encyclopedia*, Volume 2, Melbourne, 1926.
- Martin, A E, *Place Names in Victoria and Tasmania: the Romance of Nomenclature*, NSW Book Store Co P/L, 1944.
- McConville, Chris, in *Oxford Companion to Australian History*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1998.
- Mitchelton: An Adventure in History. Major Mitchell's Historic Crossing & the Mitchellstown Story*, Mitchelton Vineyard, Mitchellstown, 1974.
- Perry, T M, 'Hovell, William Hilton (1786—1875)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 1, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1966.
- Powell, J M, *The Public Lands of Australia Felix: Settlement and Land Appraisal in Victoria 1834-91 with special reference to the Western Plains*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1970.
- Spreadborough & Anderson, *Victorian Squatters*, Red Rooster Press, Ascot Vale, 1983.
- Woodhouse, Fay, *Vintage Stories: a 150 Year History of Tahbilk*, Tahbilk Pty Ltd, Nagambie, 2010.

#### Endnotes

- 1 'Tablik Tablik', meaning 'place of many water holes' was the Aboriginal name for the Goulburn region. The Parish of Tablik in the County of Moira was gazetted in 1838. The 1840 Tabilk Pastoral Run named Old Crossing Place, was subdivided in 1842. Part of the original Old Crossing Place was renamed Tabilk Station and part was renamed Old Crossing Place No. 2. These Pastoral Runs were recorded on the original Parish Plans dating back to 1838. Tabilk Vineyard Proprietary was established in 1860. The company was renamed 'Chateau Tahbilk' in 1877 when the word 'Chateau' was added and an 'h' was added to the spelling of 'Tabilk', changing it to 'Tahbilk'. 'Chateau Tahbilk' remained the name for the winery until it was changed in 2000 to Tahbilk Winery to reflect the likely cessation of the use of European traditional names for grapes by the Australian Wine Industry. The trading name for the winery and vineyard was changed to 'Tahbilk' and the word 'Chateau' was dropped.
- 2 J I Clark, *Aboriginal languages and clans: an historical atlas of western and central Victoria, 1800-1900*, Monash Publications in Geography, 1990, p. 364, 369, 376; D Barwick, 'Mapping the past: an atlas of Victorian clans 1835-1904', *Aboriginal History*, 1984, pt. 2, pp. 125-6 quoted in Geoff Hewitt, *Bayunga Waters: An Archaeology of the Goulburn River with Strathbogie Shire*, Wandong, 2000, p. 23.
- 3 *Aboriginal*, land away from camp. A E Martin, *Place Names in Victoria and Tasmania: the Romance of Nomenclature*, NSW Book Store Co P/L, 1944, p. 78. Ian D Clark & Toby Hayden, *Aboriginal Place Names*, uncertain.
- 4 Stuart H Hume, 'Hume, Hamilton (1797 - 1873)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 1, Melbourne University Press, 1966, pp. 564-565; T M Perry, 'Hovell, William Hilton (1786 - 1875)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 1, Melbourne University Press, 1966, pp. 556-557.
- 5 Peter Cabena, Heather McRae & Elizabeth Bladin, *The Lands Manual*, p. 1; Garden, op.cit., p. 33.
- 6 Garden, *ibid.*, p.20; Chris McConville, in *Oxford Companion to Australian History*, op. cit., pp. 426-8; Robyn Annear, *Bearbrass: Imagining Early Melbourne*, Black Ink, Melbourne, 2005, pp. 1-20.
- 7 D W A Baker, 'Mitchell, Sir Thomas Livingstone (1792 - 1855)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 2, Melbourne University Press, 1967, pp. 238-242.
- 8 J M Powell, *The Public Lands of Australia Felix: Settlement and Land Appraisal in Victoria 1834-91 with special reference to the Western Plains*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1970, p. xxxv.
- 9 Joseph Tice Gellibrand, in Thomas Francis Bride (ed.), *Letters from Victorian Pioneers*, Lloyd O'Neil Pty Ltd, South Yarra, 1983, p. 31; also quoted in *Mitchelton: An Adventure in History. Major Mitchell's Historic Crossing & the Mitchellstown Story*, Mitchelton Vineyard, [c. 1974] Mitchellstown, Vic., n.p.; see also P. C. James, 'Gellibrand, Joseph Tice (1792? - 1837)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 1, Melbourne University Press, 1966, pp. 437-438.
- 10 John Beeston, *A Concise History of Australian Wine*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, 2001, p. 2; A W Jose and W J Carter, *The Australian Encyclopedia*, Volume 2, 1926, Melbourne, p. 626.
- 11 David Dunstan, *Better than Pomard*, Australian Scholarly Press, Kew, 1994, p. 7.
- 12 *Ibid.*, p. 8.
- 13 Billis & Kenyon, *Pastoral Pioneers of Port Phillip*, p. 260; Spreadborough & Anderson, *Victorian Squatters*, p. 65.
- 14 *Victorian Squatters*, op.cit., p. 66 and *Pastoral Pioneers of Port Phillip*, op.cit., p. 261.
- 15 Nicholas Faith uses this term to describe Australian wine and winemaking as 'liquid gold', in his *Liquid Gold: The Story of Australian Wine and its Makers*, Pan Macmillan, Sydney, 2002.
- 16 Dunstan, op.cit., p. 45.
- 17 Fay Woodhouse, *Vintage Stories: a 150 Year History of Tahbilk*, Tahbilk Vineyard, Nagambie, 2010.



# Charles La Trobe's sketch of Chicago: a research report

By Helen Armstrong

---

**Helen Armstrong is a Volunteer Guide at La Trobe's Cottage and a committee member of the C J La Trobe Society and of the Friends of La Trobe's Cottage. She is also a committee member of the Australian Decorative and Fine Arts Society Yarra and a member of the volunteer team at the Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery. In this report, she describes how a recent lecture on 'The Architecture of Chicago' prompted some research of her own.**

Readers may be surprised to learn that a very early image of the city of Chicago is held at the State Library of Victoria. It is an 1832 sketch by Charles Joseph La Trobe, who at that time, along with the writer Washington Irving and young Count Albert de Pourtalès of Switzerland, was accompanying a survey mission deep into Indian Territory beyond the Mississippi River. This sketch is the earliest known view of the environs of Chicago<sup>1</sup>, the town not being founded until a year later in August 1833.

La Trobe was a talented artist, 'a sketcher of no mean pretensions', as described by his friend Washington Irving. He used his talent throughout his life to document the landscape wherever he went, from Switzerland, Italy, North America, Mexico, and to Australia.<sup>2</sup> Amongst his 437 known landscapes and sketches held in the Pictures Collection of the State Library of Victoria are two folios devoted to North America and Mexico.<sup>3</sup>

Due to the fact that La Trobe sketched as he travelled, with little time available to finish his works, many of his pictures are incomplete. Mostly they are pencil sketches, small in size and overlaid with a sepia wash. There are, though, a number of completed paintings which demonstrate how accomplished La Trobe was as an artist.<sup>4</sup>

While all La Trobe's known art works have been reproduced in the book *Charles Joseph La Trobe: Landscapes and Sketches*, a selection of his work can be viewed on the La Trobe Society website<sup>5</sup> and in reproduction at La Trobe's Cottage.



**Charles Joseph La Trobe, 1801-1975, artist.**  
**The Site of the City of Chicago, Michigan, 1832.**  
Pen and ink on paper. Collection: National Trust of Australia (Victoria). Deposited on long-term loan in the La Trobe Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria.

- 
- 1 Dianne Reilly. 'Charles Joseph La Trobe: the Rambler in North America', *La Trobeana*, Vol. 9, No 2, July 2010, 8-17.
  - 2 Dianne Reilly. 'Charles Joseph La Trobe: Sketcher of No Mean Pretensions', *Victorian Historical Journal*, Vol 73, 2002, 181-201.
  - 3 *Charles Joseph La Trobe: Landscapes and Sketches*. Introduced by Dianne Reilly. Notes by Victoria Hammond. Melbourne: State Library of Victoria, Tarcoola Press and National Trust of Australia (Victoria), 1999. Printer's edition, 2010 (available for purchase from the La Trobe Society, \$126)
  - 4 Dianne Reilly. 'The Sketcher of No Mean Pretensions: Charles Joseph La Trobe, the Governor and the Artist' in Elizabeth Mitford *Charles Joseph La Trobe: a Sketcher of No Mean Pretensions*. East Melbourne, National Trust of Australia (Victoria), 2006. Exhibition catalogue.
  - 5 'La Trobe the Artist'. 25 March 2011. <http://www.latrobesociety.org.au/Artist.html>
-





La Trobe's Cottage: progress on the new fence. June 2011

George Alexander Gilbert, 1815-?, artist  
A View of Jolimont, Melbourne,  
Port Phillip 1843-44  
Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria



## *Friends of La Trobe's Cottage*

### ***La Trobe's Cottage***

La Trobe's Cottage was the home of Charles Joseph La Trobe, Victoria's first governor, and his wife Sophie and their children from 1839 to 1854. Originally erected on his Jolimont estate, the single storey dwelling is constructed of panellised timber, replicating the original prefabricated structure brought by him from London. The locally built dining room (1839), the first of many additions made during La Trobe's tenure, is believed to be the oldest surviving Melbourne building.

### ***The Friends of La Trobe's Cottage***

The 'Friends of La Trobe's Cottage' was formed in 2009 under the auspices of the C J La Trobe Society to support the National Trust in its efforts to maintain the Cottage, and, through fund-raising, improve the visitor experience at the Cottage through regular public opening times, enhanced interpretation, and improved interior and exterior appearance.

### ***Current Projects***

Among the current projects of the Friends' group is the construction of a fence, sympathetic to the house and to the period when it was built. Through the agency of the National Trust, and with the able advice of Phil Tulk, the National Trust's property manager, the new fence has been installed, resulting in a more appropriate ambience and a better cared-for appearance of the whole property.

The National Trust fund-raising campaign for a new shingle roof for the Cottage to replace the badly deteriorated wooden shingles currently on the house is still in progress, and more funds are urgently required to raise the \$43,000 necessary for this project.

**John Drury**  
**Hon President**  
**Friends of La Trobe's Cottage**

# Events 2011

---

Special events to mark the La Trobe Society's 10th Anniversary continue during 2011.

Please note the dates on the list below in your diaries. The Secretary may be contacted with any queries on tel. 9646 2112 or email: [dmreilly@optusnet.com.au](mailto:dmreilly@optusnet.com.au)

## JULY

---

### Wednesday 20

#### Exhibition Opening

#### Lieutenant Governor Charles Joseph La Trobe: an exhibition of Books, Prints and Sculptures

This exhibition of portraits and related memorabilia of Charles Joseph La Trobe will be opened by La Trobe Society member Kay Craddock AM.

**Venue:** Kay Craddock – Antiquarian Bookseller, 156 Collins Street, Melbourne until 3 August

**Time:** 6.30-8.30 pm

**Cost:** No charge

**RSVP:** By Friday 15 July. For catering purposes, please phone 9646 2112 and leave names of those attending

Queenscliff, the site of the La Trobe family's holiday house. A light lunch will be served.

The afternoon program will feature a visit to the Queenscliff Historical Museum, followed by short, informative talks by historians at the Queenscliff Town Hall.

A Mayoral Civic Reception for members of the La Trobe Society will be held at 5.00 pm

**Time:** 11.00 am meet at St George's Church, Queenscliff.

A booking slip will be sent to members nearer the date

## AUGUST

---

### Thursday 18

#### Annual General Meeting and Dinner

**Guest Speaker:** Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Blainey, AC  
'Victoria in the 1840s'

**Venue:** The Lyceum Club, Ridgway Place, Melbourne

**Time:** 6.00 pm

**Cost (for dinner only):** To be advised.

**RSVP:** A booking slip will be sent to members in July

## NOVEMBER

---

### Friday 18 – Sunday 20

A weekend tour of the Western District, with Hamilton as the base.

Arrangements to be advised

## DECEMBER

---

### Friday 9

#### Christmas Cocktails

**Venue:** Melbourne Club, Collins Street, Melbourne

**Speaker:** Mr Shane Carmody, Director, Collections and Access, State Library of Victoria

**Time:** 6.30 pm

A booking slip will be sent to members nearer the date.

## OCTOBER

---

### Sunday 2

#### La Trobe's Cottage Spring Opening

**Time:** 1.00-4.00 pm.

**Cost:** Adults \$5.00; Children and Concessions \$3.00; Family \$10.00  
All welcome

### Tuesday 20

#### Candlelit Carols at the Cottage

**Venue:** La Trobe's Cottage

**Time:** 7.00-9.00 pm

**Cost:** \$10 individuals; \$20 families

### Saturday 22

#### Excursion

#### La Trobe, Miss Drysdale and the Bellarine Peninsula

This enjoyable day tour will begin at St George's Anglican Church,

## *Contributions welcome*

---

**The Editorial Committee welcomes  
contributions to La Trobeana which is  
published three times a year.**

Further information about  
the journal may be found at  
[www.latrobesociety.org.au/publications.html](http://www.latrobesociety.org.au/publications.html)

**Enquiries should be directed to**

The Honorary Secretary  
The La Trobe Society  
PO Box 65  
Port Melbourne, Vic 3207  
Phone: 9646 2112  
Email: [secretary@latrobesociety.org.au](mailto:secretary@latrobesociety.org.au)



