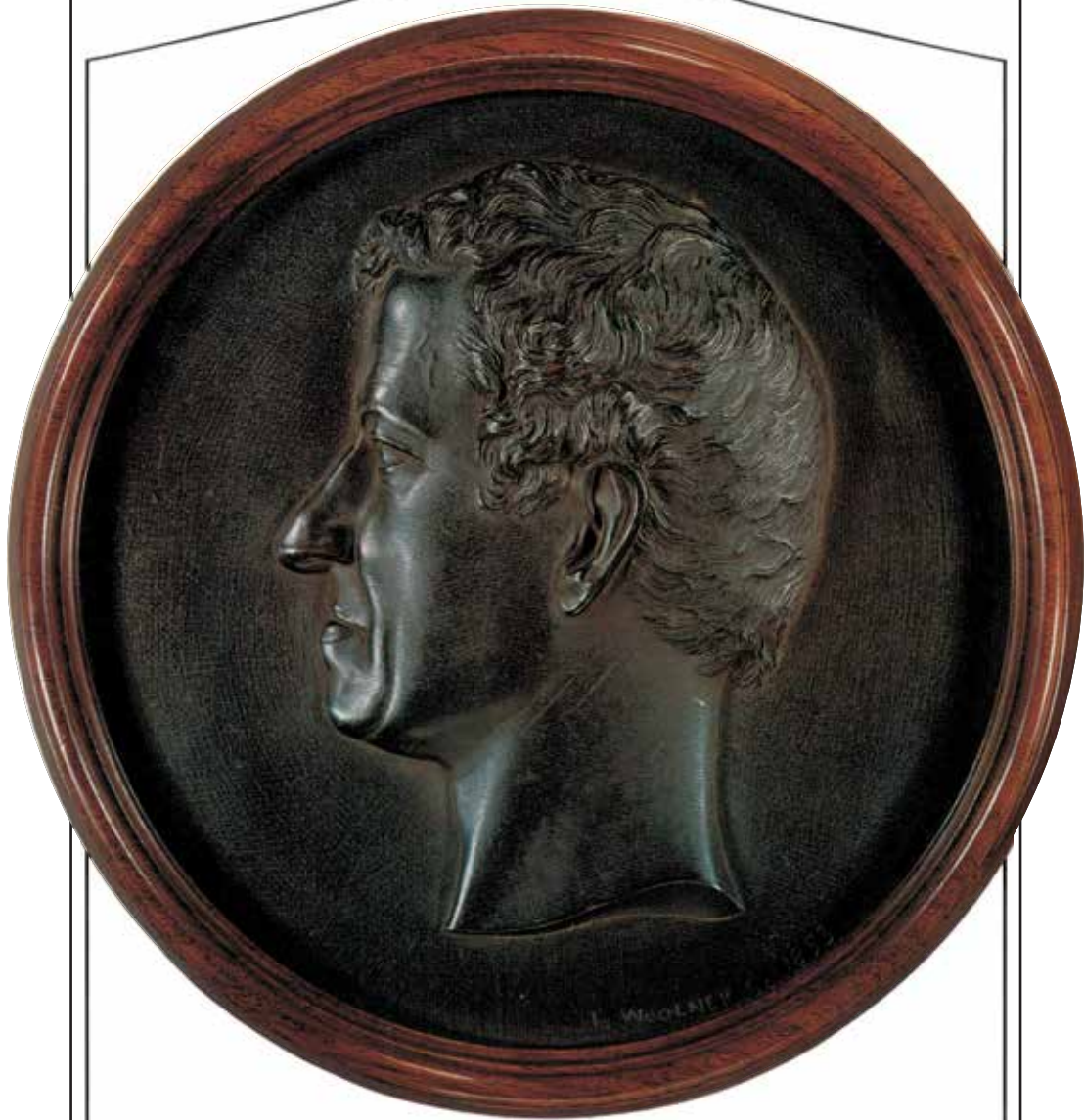


# LA TROBEANA



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

**Vol 13, No 3, November 2014**

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## *La Trobeana*

Journal of the C J La Trobe Society Inc  
Vol 13, No 3, November 2014

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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)



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### **FRONT COVER**

Thomas Woolner, 1825-1892, sculptor

Charles Joseph La Trobe

1853, diam. 24cm. Bronze portrait medallion showing the left profile of Charles Joseph La Trobe.

Signature and date incised in bronze l.r.: T. Woolner Sc. 1853: / M

La Trobe, Charles Joseph, 1801-1875. Accessioned 1894

Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria, H5489

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# A Word from the Vice-President

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Regrettably, I am standing in for our President Diane Gardiner who is on sick leave. I know that you will all join with me in sending our best wishes for her recovery.

I would like to record our most successful event held at Government House on 2 October 2014 when the Governor of Victoria and Patron of the La Trobe Society, His Excellency the Honourable Alex Chernov AC QC, hosted a delightful reception for 150 members of the Society to celebrate the 175th anniversary of the arrival in Melbourne of Superintendent La Trobe on 3 October 1839. The Governor spoke warmly of the role that La Trobe played in the foundation of modern-day Victoria. La Trobe Society Secretary, Dianne Reilly, representing Diane Gardiner who had organised the event, responded to the Governor's address and presented him with a copy of *La Trobe's Australian Notes 1839-1854*.

As always, this edition of *La Trobeana* contains a great deal of very interesting reading. Dr Madonna Grehan, La Trobe Society Fellow at the State Library of Victoria, continues the theme of her Friends of La Trobe's Cottage Lecture for 2014 in her article 'Safely thro' her Confinement', discussing the vicissitudes of bearing and rearing babies in nineteenth-century Victoria; Dr Sue Reynolds' paper, presented as the La Trobe Society Lecture for this year's Rare Book Week, sheds light on the history of the Supreme Court of Victoria Library; Caroline Clemente's address given at the Society's Annual General Meeting in August this year, reflects on La Trobe's role in fostering Pre-Raphaelite Thomas Woolner's career as a sculptor; and Dr Andrew Lemon and Marjorie Morgan's joint La Trobe Society and Royal Historical Society 2014 AGL Shaw Lecture brings to life

the horrors of Australia's worst shipwreck, the loss of the *Cataraqui*, and the role of La Trobe in dealing with the aftermath.

Of particular interest is the report by Dr Fay Woodhouse on the fascinating and detailed work of Helen Armstrong and John Botham in listing and describing virtually every known site or feature of the landscape named in La Trobe's honour. Quite a surprising catalogue!

On your behalf, I thank all contributors to this issue of *La Trobeana* for bringing their expertise to the task of making Charles Joseph La Trobe's role in Victoria's history better known and appreciated.

**Daryl Ross**  
**Honorary Vice-President**  
**C J La Trobe Society**

# The Chancellor's Column

---

Charles Joseph La Trobe was undoubtedly a visionary who could see a future city, with splendid gardens, parklands and impressive civic buildings rising from the humble beginnings of the Melbourne that he encountered when he arrived in 1839. A visionary like C J La Trobe may likewise have foreseen internationally-acclaimed wineries in the bushland that was the Yarra Valley of the mid-19th century.

La Trobe University also seeks to be visionary in its approach, working with our communities today while envisaging an impressive future for tomorrow. It is this vision for our future which lay at the heart of the decision to appoint the State's first University Elder, Aunty Joy Murphy AO. La Trobe University has a heritage of significant engagement with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, including a long-standing relationship with Aunty Joy Murphy, who is the senior Wurundjeri Elder and great grandniece of William Barack, the last traditional Wurundjeri 'ngurungaeta' or clan head.

I had the honour of confirming Aunty Joy's appointment as the inaugural University Elder at a very moving and inspiring ceremony on 22 July 2014. It was attended by many members of the University staff and local indigenous communities. As part of the ceremony, I was delighted to be able to present to Aunty Joy a traditionally made fur cape, together with an original piece of artwork created by our very own Manager of Indigenous Services, Ms Nellie Green. The whole event was accompanied by a stunning and haunting musical didgeridoo performance.

Aunty Joy Murphy is a significant and highly regarded Elder of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nations. As a senior Elder she has welcomed royalty, presidents, dignitaries and thousands of other people to the land of her ancestors. She is an Ambassador for BreastScreen Victoria, Australia Day Victoria and Zoos

Victoria. She has been a trustee of the National Gallery of Victoria, a member of the Equal Opportunity Commission of Victoria, as well a member of the Victoria Police Ethical Standards Consultative Committee.

She also co-chaired the Royal Commission Review into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody from 2003 to 2005. In 2002 she was awarded the Victorian Aboriginal Women's Award and in 2006 was appointed as an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) 'for her service to the community, particularly the Aborigines, through significant contributions in the fields of social justice, land rights, equal opportunity, art and reconciliation.

Expansion of indigenous education is a significant part of La Trobe's new Future Ready Strategy, with plans to double the number of Aboriginal students over the next five years. The University will next year commence an online Indigenous Studies module introducing all students to Aboriginal knowledge and values, engaging them with the richness of indigenous perspectives and culture. With about 170 indigenous students and thirty staff, La Trobe carries out multi-disciplinary teaching, learning and research in Indigenous Australian studies across all its faculties and campuses. It is also a partner in the Federal Government's Co-operative Research Centre for Aboriginal Health and the Lowitja Institute, which work to improve health service and policy.

I am delighted Aunty Joy has accepted this appointment, which highlights our commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and we warmly welcome her as a member of the La Trobe community. As La Trobe University Elder she will formalise the work she has done in providing advice on culture and curriculum, while also carrying out ceremonial roles.

**Adrienne E Clarke AC**  
**Chancellor, La Trobe University**

*Reception for the La Trobe  
Society to mark the 175th  
Anniversary of the Arrival of  
Lieutenant-Governor Charles  
Joseph La Trobe*

**Thursday 2 October, 2014**

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**G**ood evening everyone.

Elizabeth joins me in welcoming you to Government House to mark the 175th Anniversary of the arrival of Charles Joseph La Trobe in Victoria, and the great work of the La Trobe Society that keeps our first Vice-Regal representative firmly in our mind. The importance of the occasion this evening is confirmed by the presence here of almost a record number of distinguished Victorians each of whom, like La Trobe, has made a significant contribution to Victoria. They include:

Former Governors – The Honourable Sir James Gobbo, The Honourable John Landy, Professor the Honourable David de Kretser and Mrs Jan de Kretser.

The Most Reverend Dr Philip Freier, Anglican Archbishop of Melbourne and the Anglican Primate in Australia and Mrs Joy Freier, Lady Potter, Professor Adrienne Clarke, former Lieutenant-Governor of Victoria and Chancellor of La Trobe University, Professor John Dewar, Vice-Chancellor of La Trobe

University, Dr Dianne Reilly, Secretary of the La Trobe Society and Mr John Drury, Manager of the La Trobe Society and members of its committee, and the many La Trobe scholars.

Can I begin by noting sadly the unavoidable absence this evening of the dynamic President of the Society, and a great friend of Government House, Ms Diane Gardiner. Unfortunately, Diane has a health issue and cannot be with us this evening. On behalf of us all I wish her a speedy recovery. Our thoughts and best wishes are with her and with her family.

Since we are celebrating La Trobe's arrival here it may be worth noting some aspects of it. First, although La Trobe's official arrival in Melbourne, as Superintendent of the Port Phillip District of New South Wales, is said to have been on 3 October 1839, in fact his ship arrived in the bay on 30 September 1839. Notwithstanding driving rain, La Trobe was keen to have a glimpse of Melbourne, so he rowed ashore on the next day – on 1 October, when he was escorted into town for a first unofficial view of his new domain, before being rowed back to his ship. He and his family could not disembark the following day because the



His Excellency the Honourable Alex Chernov addressing the La Trobe Society and guests Mrs Elizabeth Chernov, Dr Dianne Reilly, Mr John Drury, Mr Ian Phipps, Lady Potter, Professor Adrienne Clarke, The Most Reverend Dr Philip Freier, Professor the Honourable David de Kretser  
 Photographer: Greta Costello Photography

weather was so bad – and so it was on 3 October 1839 that he managed to arrive here to an official welcome. This little trivia should please the hearts of the purists.

The second matter to note about his arrival is the enthusiasm with which he was received by the colonists. They gave him a ‘fulsome’ address (which contrasted with what they thought of him at the time of his departure). Relevantly, the address read:

You are the harbinger of our increased prosperity...a gentleman of whose high intellectual powers, right mindedness, firmness, courtesy and talents for business, reports speak so favourably (and under whose enlightened administration) Australia Felix must soon become one of the most important possessions of Britain.

I think none of our modern Governors has ever received such acclamation when taking office.

La Trobe gave as good as he got. His response to his welcome included these words:

If appearance may be trusted, we may reasonably hope that increasing prosperity may still

continue to mark the career of both individuals, and of the community at large... Our harmony and energy, as a people, must make up for our want of means.

The third matter to note about La Trobe’s arrival is that he brought with him on his ship his own prefabricated house, in which he lived for almost fifteen years and which now stands adjacent to Sir Dallas Brooks Drive in the vicinity of The Shrine.

Be that as it may, it was not until Separation in 1851 that he was appointed Lieutenant-Governor of the new colony.

Notwithstanding these early exchanges of mutual admiration, it was not long before La Trobe was at odds with many colonists. Now is not the time to examine his administration. I merely mention that he became progressively more unpopular as time went by. His mining licencing tax, for example, was particularly unpopular. Ultimately, of course, these difficulties led to the unfortunate incident at Eureka in relation to which his successor, Sir Charles Hotham, played an important role.

La Trobe did, however, make a lasting contribution to Melbourne that included playing a key role in establishing its cultural base. For example, when the population of Melbourne was barely 100,000, he lent his assistance to the



Guests at the reception in the Drawing Room  
Photographer: Greta Costello Photography

establishment of the University of Melbourne, the Public Library, the Houses of Parliament and other like icons which are still used and admired in the context of the day-to-day life of our city.

La Trobe was also patron and instigator of cultural and learned bodies, such as the Philosophical Society (now the Royal Society of Victoria), the Mechanics' Institute (now the Melbourne Athenaeum), the Royal Melbourne Philharmonic Society, and many parks and gardens including the Royal Botanic Gardens, Fitzroy Gardens and Royal Park.

Having been posted two years prior to his arrival here to the British West Indies by the Colonial Office to inspect the schools which had been established to provide education of almost 780,000 recently emancipated slaves, universal education had become a particular concern of La Trobe when he was here. Thus, it was under his aegis that the foundation stones of the University of Melbourne and the Public Library were laid in 1853.

Time does not permit an analysis of his talents as an artist. But it should be mentioned that he produced many fine landscapes and sketches of Melbourne and rural Victoria as a result of his admiration for the development of Melbourne and his many visits to country areas. Government House has a beautiful book titled *Charles Joseph La Trobe: Landscapes and Sketches* that includes an informative introduction by

Dr Reilly, and displays La Trobe's remarkable talent in that regard.

But the harassment and stress that La Trobe had to endure over many years caused him to submit his resignation on 31 December 1852. For various reasons his successor, Sir Charles Hotham, did not arrive here until May 1854. So La Trobe eventually left Melbourne almost fifteen years after arriving here, effectively a broken man. His wife had died in Switzerland and it took many years after he left the Colony before the seemingly ungrateful British Government granted him a meagre pension. His departure reminds me of the person of whom it was said that he arrived full of enthusiasm and when he left he was fired with enthusiasm.

I conclude by paying a tribute to the La Trobe Society and its members for the work they do in promoting a greater recognition and understanding in our community of La Trobe and of our very early colonial history. Our Victorian community is all the richer for the presence here of this Society – and as Governor of Victoria and as the Society's Patron, I thank you for your work.

And it now gives me great pleasure to call on Dr Dianne Reilly, the Secretary and co-founder of the Society.

**Alex Chernov**



# *Dianne Reilly's Response to the Governor*

2 October 2014

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Your Excellency, on behalf of the members of the La Trobe Society, please accept my thanks to you, as Patron, and to Mrs Chernov for inviting us to Government House to celebrate the anniversary of the arrival in Melbourne of Superintendent Charles Joseph La Trobe 175 years ago tomorrow.

Regrettably, I am standing in tonight for the La Trobe Society President Diane Gardiner who is unwell.

Your remarks, Your Excellency, have given us an interesting appraisal of La Trobe the man, his achievements and his failures during the fifteen years of his tenure here in Victoria.

He it was who established the solid foundations on which the present-day State of Victoria is built.

It was because of the efforts in 2001 of a small group of people, convinced that La Trobe was not given his rightful place in Australian history, nor was even generally known as he should be in the Victorian community, that the La Trobe Society was formed.

Its aims are to promote recognition and understanding of the achievements of Charles Joseph La Trobe, and to facilitate public

awareness and a love of the history of Victoria among those who live here.

I think that members of the Society can be proud that we have gone quite some way in making him more generally known by Victorians today. One example is the La Trobe statue by sculptor Peter Corlett, which was unveiled by our former Patron, Professor David de Kretser in 2006 during his term as Governor of Victoria. We can also be proud of the Society's journal *La Trobeana* which has a wide circulation.

Membership of the La Trobe Society currently stands at 250, and we are delighted to number previous Patrons, Mr John Landy and Professor David de Kretser as members.

In fact, it was Mr Landy who set the Society off to a flying start with a splendid launch party here at Government House in 2001.

Your Excellency, thank you for your support as Patron of the La Trobe Society, and for your hospitality to celebrate the 175th anniversary of the arrival in Melbourne of Charles Joseph La Trobe.

On behalf of the Society, I would like you to accept a copy of La Trobe's Australian diary notes covering his life in Victoria.

# *‘Safely thro’ her Confinement’: bearing and rearing babies in nineteenth century Victoria*

By Dr Madonna Grehan

Madonna Grehan held the C J La Trobe Society Fellowship for 2013 at the State Library of Victoria. Madonna is an independent historian and an Honorary Fellow in Nursing at the University of Melbourne’s School of Health Sciences. Originally trained as a nurse and midwife, Madonna then worked in women’s health clinical research for twelve years before undertaking a PhD in history. Her subject was the roles of nurses and midwives in the care of women in Victoria since European settlement, a topic which continues to raise more questions than it answers. Her other research areas are women’s labour history, biography and aspects of military nursing. Madonna is an oral history interviewer for the National Library of Australia and Honorary Director of the Australian Nursing and Midwifery History Project, a web-based resource. She is President of the Medical History Society of Victoria and a volunteer social history tour guide at the Abbotsford Convent in Melbourne.

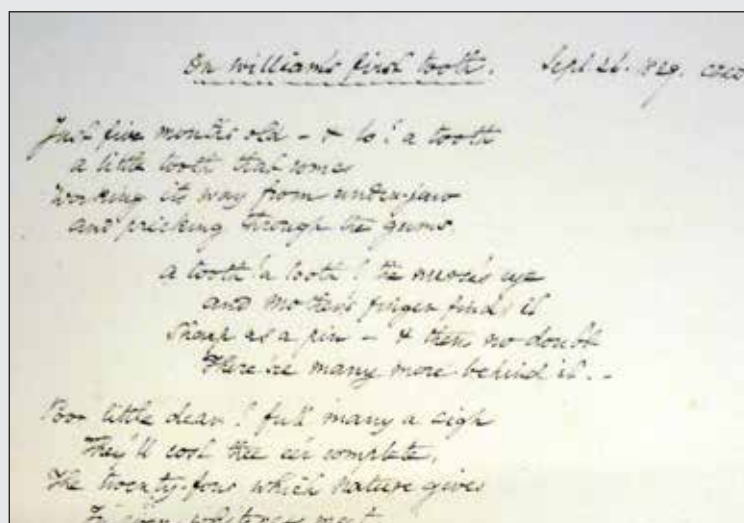
This is an edited version of a presentation that was given to the Friends of La Trobe Cottage on Tuesday 29 April 2014 at Domain House. Dr Grehan wishes to thank Sandra Burt, Shona Dewar, Dianne Reilly and the staff of the State Library of Victoria.

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## **Background**

Within the pages of Mrs Leonard Seeley’s *Commonplace Book 1825-1854*, held by the State Library of Victoria, is a whimsical nine-verse poem entitled ‘On William’s First Tooth’. It catalogues a journey which begins and ends with pain and misery. The new tooth bursts through gums and, while painful in the short term, is recognised as useful in the long term until, later in life, the old tooth decays, giving its owner immeasurable grief and necessitating extraction of the offender to obtain the necessary relief. Dated 26 September 1829, this playful poem in Mrs Seeley’s scrap book is initialled ‘CJLT’. Another poem in the same book was penned by ‘C.J. La Trobe’.<sup>1</sup>

It may come as a surprise to find that a man wrote so imaginatively about what is an expected milestone in an infant’s life. Yet accounts similar to this one can be found in abundance among the papers of men. Men’s observations on the most private of topics can be germane and illuminating. Their writings are pertinent to the research I have been pursuing during my C.J. La Trobe Society Fellowship at the State Library of Victoria. My aim is to develop our understanding of the everyday lives of women and families in nineteenth-century Australia on a universal, yet private, aspect of settlement. My research question centres on the provision of, and receipt of, maternity care in nineteenth century Australia, during the administration of C.J. La Trobe and beyond.



**Charles Joseph La Trobe  
William's first tooth (detail)**

Mrs Leonard Benton Seeley, *Commonplace Book*, 1825-1854  
Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria, MS 13174  
The London firm of Seeley and Burnside was La Trobe's publisher

A transcription of the poem will be published in a forthcoming issue of *La Trobeana*

The questions which inform my research are: how did women prepare for and approach birth? What happened when pregnancy and labour did not go smoothly? Who was engaged in maternity attendance and how were they prepared for practice? I particularly want to understand how women who worked as midwives navigated their everyday lives while bearing and rearing their own children. In building a realistic and nuanced history of this arena, I also want to analyse women's place in the maternity care landscape, one that has been described as contested professional domain.<sup>2</sup>

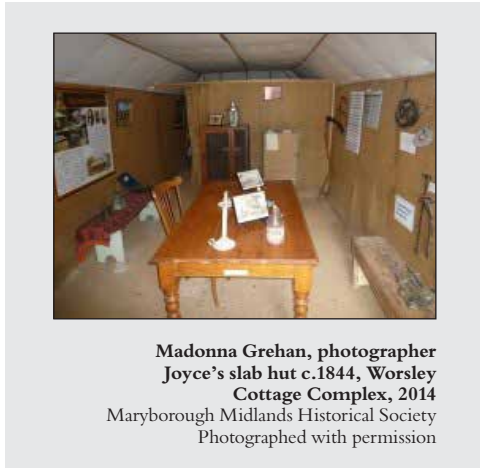
It is reasonable to think that women's papers might offer evidence which can answer these questions, but extant and accessible documentary sources that were generated by women are relatively few and far between. This applies more so to women who worked. It is also fair to say that, in the diaries and correspondence that do exist from this period, women tended to write about pregnancy and birth modestly, referring to reproductive events euphemistically and barely expanding beyond basic details.<sup>3</sup> For a different perspective on the lives of women and families, I have turned to the papers of men as another source of evidence. These are surprising and revealing. Some men wrote about reproductive episodes and babies in great detail, and alongside unrelated subjects including: gardening, food, the weather, financial difficulties, and myriad others. In this paper I present a snapshot of my research findings: local and personal perspectives on birth and raising babies in the District of Port Phillip/

Colony of Victoria. These impressions are from men and women whose papers are held by the State Library of Victoria.

In presenting extracts of my research, it is worthwhile acknowledging that conditions for women in the nineteenth century were a far cry from the safety and security that twenty-first century maternity care in Australia affords. Life in the nineteenth century was full of uncertainties. It was an age of truly natural childbirth, a time before caesarean section, blood transfusions and antibiotics. Up to the last decade of the nineteenth century, around ninety-seven per cent of women in Victoria had their babies at home, perhaps a canvas tent or rough humpy on the goldfields, a one-roomed hut with a curtain separating sleeping quarters from the rest of the dwelling or, for the lucky few, a house. Many women lived in geographically isolated locations, far from immediate help. Communities relied on whoever was best fitted for what could be, at times, an unenviable task of providing care in the most difficult of circumstances, by candlelight, without running water, without pain relief. At least half of all births in Victoria in the nineteenth century were attended by women alone, and in greater numbers in rural areas. A proportion of these attendants were illiterate.<sup>4</sup>

In this context, it is unsurprising that in diaries and correspondence, men and women expressed mixed emotions about birth and babies. These emotions revolved around fear, relief, pride and, sometimes, grief. Some wrote about a fear of potential mortality during

labour. Some then expressed enormous relief at life having been preserved and felt pride in their newborn. Others wrote of deep sorrow, after miscarriage, maternal death and/or infant death. Still others found recovery slow and breast feeding difficult. The following extracts offer a window on just some of these intensely personal experiences.



### *A safe arrival*

Mary Graham had been married twelve months when she gave birth to a baby at full term in August 1846. Six weeks later, her husband James Graham, a Melbourne merchant, informed several friends of the birth. In one letter he wrote:

You will be glad to hear that Mrs Graham has got over all her troubles and presented me with a fine son and heir, a fine, healthy, strong fellow. The young gentleman made his appearance on the 26th [sic] day of June. Mrs Graham had a very good time of it indeed and was up all right again a week afterwards. Both are quite well I am happy to say.<sup>5</sup>

What exactly Mrs Graham's "troubles" were is not clear. Mary Graham was fecund, bearing seventeen more children although eight of them died at a young age.<sup>6</sup> Best practice in the mid-century was for women to 'lie-in' for some time, resting before and after the baby was born for at least ten days. But some women could not afford this luxury. Dr Samuel Clutterbuck was travelling in eastern Victoria in the early 1850s when he and his companions arrived at their destination. There they were met by 'a specimen of Bush-women's hardi-hood.' The heavily pregnant woman who greeted them was Mrs Connor, the spouse of one of the party's

servants. As Clutterbuck reported, Mrs Connor fed the travelling party and then:

went to bed, all well and now was expecting at 12 [sic] at night on Saturday, having been hard at work until the last minutes. And on calling...this morning, I found the lady been safely "accouchee" of a "fine boy", and, as she herself informed me, through a partition of her hut, was "uncommonly well", and should be very soon able and happy to wait on me when I came to see her.<sup>7</sup>

Suffering is a consistent theme in the private papers examined. Mrs Penelope Selby, already a mother, in 1850 attended at the first birth of her sister Mary. In correspondence to her family, Mrs Selby wrote of the arrival of this 'little Australian niece, a native of course,' reporting that:

Mary had a daughter on 16 October...she is doing as well as can be expected...we managed very well; poor thing she had a long labour...She first complained on Monday [14 October] afternoon so I dispatched Mr Hood about four o'clock to Belfast, he returned with Dr Hurne about twelve at night [15 October], she did not become very bad until about three the next day and the baby was born soon after twelve at night [16 October]...She was sorely tried towards the last and quite lost heart, but there was never the slightest danger, only she never thought "it would be so bad". I laughed when baby was born and told her it was truly the "mountain bringing forth the mouse".<sup>8</sup>

It was easy to laugh in retrospect at a forty-eight hour labour if the mother survived it. Helen Read suffered 'very much' for almost three days before she delivered a boy. The Reads' delight was shattered when that baby died at five months of age. A year later, Mrs Read had a girl. Her husband, George, wrote in his diary that after her confinement, Helen was 'doing well. Thank God for that and all other mercies.'<sup>9</sup>

James Black's journey to Melbourne aboard the *Yarra* in 1852 reveals an alarming maternity episode occurring at sea:



S T Gill, 1818–1880, artist  
**Diggers hut,**  
**Forest Creek 1852**  
 Watercolour, pencil and  
 gum arabic on paper  
 Pictures Collection, State  
 Library of Victoria, H5333

One morning, my wife presented me with a daughter. Although our berth was the most airy in the whole vessell [sic], yet in consequence of the heat of the weather and the enclosed confinement required to ensure privacy, syncopis [sic] brought on in which the patient lay three consecutive days without sense and only such motion as resulted from her laboured breathing. During this time her hair was cut off and her head shaved.<sup>10</sup>

Syncope was the term for fainting, but in this case Mrs Black clearly was what we now understand to be unconscious. What treatment the *Yara's* surgeon applied was not recorded, but James Black recognised that his wife was in danger. A Swedish vessel was located about four miles away and so Black asked the captain to contact them for help. James Black and a party of sailors rowed over to the Swedish ship, but it had no doctor on board. Neither captain nor crew could speak English and Black had no knowledge of Swedish. Black did the only thing available to him and improvised, using a combination of 'pantomime and a few latin [sic] and french [sic] words' to explain the reason for his marine visit. The Swedes offered potions from the ship's medicine chest, but Black had no idea which medicine would be useful. He instead accepted a gift of two dozen oranges. On boarding the *Yara*, Black was relieved to find his wife had regained consciousness. She gradually but slowly improved, enjoying her medicinal oranges.<sup>11</sup>

### ***Complexities in birth***

In an era before caesarean section, when trouble arose during the birth, the options were unpalatable. Reverend Andrew Mitchell Ramsay's wife, Isabella, was called to her sister's labour one evening in 1858. The fetus was lying in the uterus in the transverse position, referred to as 'a cross birth'. The only alternative was for the doctor to turn the unborn baby into a position compatible with delivery. This was a difficult and risky procedure. Mrs Ramsay recorded in her diary that an instrumental birth was necessary so that 'Chloroform had to be resorted to and Dr Haden called. Very successful, a little daughter born about six o'clock.'<sup>12</sup>

Henry Mundy, a miner living near Smythesdale in Victoria's goldfields, knew from bitter experience that childbirth was risky for all concerned. In 1855, Mundy's wife, Ann, endured two days of labour in her first pregnancy. Mundy waited outside the tent during that time, listening to his wife's muffled cries. In the end, Ann Mundy was fortunate. She was attended by a raft of local women, her mother, and also a doctor who would not leave the bedside. Eventually, the baby was sacrificed to preserve the mother's life. Mundy buried the baby on the hillside, fencing in the grave to alert gold prospectors. Ann Mundy was weak from this instrumental birth, but she recovered and was pregnant again within months. In the weeks leading up to the second birth, Henry described his wife as 'unusually nervous'. To his great relief, after just a few hours of uncomplicated labour 'an unusual voice was heard by us all, in the tent. "By golly" my mates remarked, "what lungs the kiddy has got".'<sup>13</sup>

Labour was such a perilous process that many of the papers examined reveal a family's collective fear and then relief in childbirth episodes, amply demonstrated by the Beale Family Papers. Katherine Beale was a mother of a large family. In August 1854, she rejoiced at news of 'a beloved child being again brought forth thro' the peril of childbirth...this is a blessing.'<sup>14</sup> Two months later, with news that another was 'at present in affliction', Katherine Beale rejoiced again, writing that: 'We have heard of one dear Child being safely thro' her confinement.'<sup>15</sup> But

a little twin brother still born, God has given us one and taken the other...I should have been very proud of my little boy if he had lived, but I am truly thankful, thank God'.<sup>19</sup>

Miscarriage, stillbirths and infant deaths were simply crosses that some parents had to bear. Even by the 1860s, medical science could not always pinpoint the numerous medical conditions which led to maternal death. It resulted from haemorrhage in many cases, while in others infection post-partum was a



S T Gill, 1818-1880, artist  
Zealous gold diggers, Bendigo 1852

Lithograph on cream paper  
Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria, H17089  
Shows an industrious family of gold diggers. The mother holds a baby while rocking the miners' cradle.

in 1856, Katherine Beale recorded immense sorrow at the death of her thirty-year-old daughter Rose and her stillborn baby:

my tears are flowing for a beloved child of 30 ...I shall never hear that name again, that ever with such love wished me many happy returns, a painful thought. It is like a sad dream, but as it is indeed thus, since the 20th of last month we have been heavily visited: first the dear Infant, then the dear Mother.<sup>16</sup>

For Rose Beale's brothers and sisters, this loss was no less difficult to bear. John Beale wrote that the family 'all missed her most bitterly; for months after I did not know how to believe it, while passing to and from my work I was continually expecting to see her coming across the paddock as in old times to have a little chat. It made me feel very sad.'<sup>17</sup> A year later when John Beale's wife Emma gave birth to their first baby, he wrote: 'I thought I would lose both the Mother and child, but thank God he spared them to me.'<sup>18</sup> Four years later, as a father of four children, John Beale recorded the birth of another daughter: 'The Mother and child well,

cause, or renal failure from conditions specific to pregnancy. Pregnant women were acutely aware that death was a possible outcome of the maternal state. A poignant example comes from the diary of Eliza Pettingal (née Jennings). Of the impending birth of her first baby, in December 1824, Eliza wrote:

Should my life be spared I expect in another week to become a mother. In anticipating this event I desire to look up to Him who can deliver in the painful hour: and here desire to record the great goodness and mercy of God toward me hitherto and with feelings of unfeigned gratitude desire to thank that God who has preserved my health and comforts to the present period. Lord thou knowest it has been my earnest prayer that if the life of the dear infant be spared it may be sanctified to thee from its birth.<sup>20</sup>

This prayerful entry concludes Eliza Pettingal's journal. An undated entry in another hand follows, in all likelihood that of her brother,

Henry Jennings, a solicitor who settled in Melbourne. The afterword reads: 'The amiable writer did not survive the event she anticipated. After suffering much and undergoing a painful operation her angelic soul returned to its maker'.<sup>21</sup> It is likely that Eliza endured an instrumental birth.

With what can only be described as exemplary fortitude, in the 1840s, Penelope Selby, a mother of two boys, endured the loss of at least six advanced pregnancies. Mrs Selby's

afternoon when she took ill. Armstrong rode to Corio & brought Dr Shaw, who arrived to tea. At 5 o'clock this morning a fine boy, the 6th boy and 7th child was added to the family & she [Vera] is doing nicely.<sup>23</sup>

But even when mothers and babies survived birth, there were other hurdles. Less than a month of age, the Armstrong's baby was



**Sarah Susanna Bunbury, artist**  
**Front view of Stanney - February 1842**

Watercolour on buff paper  
Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria, H6163  
The Bunbury family's farm at Darebin, to which they moved from Brunswick Street, New Town (Fitzroy)

fecundity, combined with these repeated pregnancy losses, taxed her health. At the ripe old age of 34, in pain and extreme discomfort from what she called 'rheumatism', Selby declared: 'I am an old woman'. Her troubles continued into 1848. In correspondence to her mother about her latest pregnancy loss, she wrote: 'Thank God I have been once more spared although as usual my poor baby was dead. I was really a pitiable object for some time but have recovered very well. I am now undergoing an ordeal of calomel [mercury] and my mouth is very sore in consequence'.<sup>22</sup>

At Miss Anne Drysdale's station on the Bellarine Peninsula, the shearing of 2,060 sheep had just finished in November 1841 when the cook went into labour with her seventh baby. As Miss Drysdale's diary shows, childbirth could be mightily inconvenient:

We had all along been afraid that Vera, Armstrong's wife, would be confined before the shearing was over which would have been unfortunate as she is cook for the whole establishment, but she continued quite well & active the whole time until yesterday

taken ill with erysipelas, an infection of the skin which can become systemic. Miss Drysdale recorded that: 'Dr Shaw came...[and] having left the baby much worse, about sunset the poor baby died...The poor little thing screamed dreadfully the 2 last days & must have suffered much pain so its death was a relief'. A year on, Vera Armstrong had another son. The postnatal period was complicated by an episode of dysentery, during which a 'nurse' was employed.<sup>24</sup> Whether the nurse was for the mother of the infant was not stated.

The death of a mother in childbirth inevitably had a ripple effect throughout families and communities. In 1859, Tasmanian farmer David Best received postal mail from one of his daughters in Victoria. The envelope bore a black seal, an antecedent of modern day express post. Black sealed mail cost more to send than standard mail with a red seal. The black seal indicated news of a calamity. David Best's reply to his daughter is a poignant expression of grief and yet relief:

Received your sad communication dated 1 April only yesterday 28th...when I saw the black seal I was filled with an apprehension that it

might be your dear sister. And I assure you I felt deeply grateful it was not her. Grief attending the loss of a dear little innocent is very poignant. I have felt it myself and it returns upon me in the present instance. I therefore can deeply sympathise with others. It has pleased God to remove the dear Babe from a world of trouble to endless happiness.<sup>25</sup>

For Stephen Charman, the death of his wife and baby inflicted a deep sorrow that lasted for years. Nineteen year old Harriet gave birth on board *Platina* on the journey to Australia in 1842. She and her unnamed baby boy died soon after their arrival in Melbourne. Eleven years after the event, Charman wrote to his brother in



Madonna Grehan, photographer  
A cottage in Maryborough,  
Central Victoria, 2014  
Brick, shingle roof and two rooms  
equalled luxury

England, explaining the lack of communication from Australia: 'I had the misfortune to loose [sic] my wife and child soon after I came here [in 1842]. I then ambled from one employment to another for some time'.<sup>26</sup> Stephen Charman's second wife bore him many children.

### ***Infant feeding, teething and wet nursing***

Surviving the birth and the postnatal period was not the only challenge that faced mothers. Feeding an infant, teething and weaning presented other complexities and, sometimes, sorrows. The adage that breast milk is best for babies applied in the nineteenth century because it was simply the safest method of feeding. The predominant form of infant nutrition, even this natural process, was not always trouble-free. Penelope Selby, for instance, wrote of her sister Mary that 'she will be an excellent nurse, but unfortunately her supplies are rather sore, cracked. I do not know that we could have avoided it'.<sup>27</sup> Cracked nipples or an abundance of milk sometimes led

to mastitis, an inflammation of the breast that, in turn, could progress to local abscesses or even septicaemia. In July 1857, Abraham Booth's son was born safely after an uncomplicated labour, but four days later, Booth was obliged to borrow a 'Breast Glass' (a breast pump). Its use may have been necessary to draw the nipples out for the baby to attach or to relieve the mother's cracked nipples. Or it may have been used to draw off an oversupply of milk. Whatever was the problem, this reproductive episode called for many visits from Dr King whose bill in September 1857 totalled £30. A year later, Hannah Booth miscarried of twins.<sup>28</sup>

Reverend Andrew Mitchell Ramsay's wife, Isabella, was on board the *Anne Milne* in 1846, travelling from Scotland to Australia, when she ran into trouble with breastfeeding. Ramsay wryly described his wife's efforts at weaning:

Mrs Ramsay is a good deal pained throughout the day. She feels rather oppressed now with the nursing of little George. He bites her breast almost every time she gives him a suck. Poor little fellow he thinks little of the pain he gives her. He has thriven, and singly, since he came on board.<sup>29</sup>

Days later Ramsay wrote 'Little George sports with his mamma's breasts and appears indifferent to the suck. His mamma takes the hint and weans. She begins to suffer from the state of her breasts and is confined to bed.' After two days of enduring this intense discomfort, Little George was allowed on the breast again.<sup>30</sup> Other women found that babies weaned themselves, despite a mother's best efforts to continue. Writing to her sister in 1867, Jane Holloway wrote: 'Annie is growing a strong big baby, but I fear she will wean herself soon, I have so often such trouble to get her to take the breast; she will go four or five hours without it sometimes'.<sup>31</sup>

If a breast milk supply was adequate, these babies thrived but sometimes to the detriment of their mother. Sally Bunbury was a devoted mother who delighted in her healthy babies, having experienced several miscarriages. In 1841, from the Melbourne suburb of New Town, she wrote to her father announcing that 'we are all quite well now. I was getting very thin and losing my strength from nursing my great bouncing Frank entirely, so Dr. Meyer made me begin to feed him once a day, and I feel all the better for it'.<sup>32</sup> This weaning was necessary because Sally Bunbury may have been pregnant



again. But weaning a baby on to another source of milk, such as cow's milk, was risky. At eight months baby Frank developed dysentery. The doctor lanced his gums and applied leeches to no avail. The infant's dying groans distressed his devoted parents.<sup>33</sup>

John Sims and his wife lived at Wil Wil Rook near the village of Pentridge. Six weeks before their first baby was due in November 1855, John Sims engaged Dr Thomas Embling, his Oddfellows' Lodge surgeon and accoucheur, to attend at the birth. When his wife went into labour, Sims rode into Collingwood to fetch the doctor. The baby was born after a two-day labour at eight months and two weeks' gestation, at that time considered a 'premature birth'. John Sims recorded in his diary that the baby girl would not suckle the breast 'as the nurses cannot draw out the nipples, but it will eat gruel wonderfully'.<sup>34</sup> The use of gruel in newborns in this way was, and still is, dangerous because the gut cannot tolerate food other than milk. Fortunately for baby Sims, within a couple of days, she was feeding entirely from the breast. Mrs Sims, however, was poorly for months following, possibly suffering from post-natal depression. When the baby was six months old, she went to Melbourne to see her parents. Sims wrote in his diary: 'I am as miserable as a man can possibly be, with no one to speak to except the cockatoo. And he calls me all the wretches he can think of'.<sup>35</sup>

Some women who could not breast feed their babies engaged a wet nurse, usually for a fee. Violet McCombe, the wife of a Melbourne auctioneer, paid her 'excellent' wet nurse in 1857 the substantial sum of £60 per annum. Her baby thrived.<sup>36</sup> Likewise, Kate Swanston, daughter-in-law of Captain Charles Swanston, reportedly was not able to nurse her baby Nowell. He, too, thrived on the milk of an employed wet nurse.<sup>37</sup> The feeding of babies occupied much time and attention, alongside

myriad other activities that constituted the role of a mother. With so many tasks, it is hard to see how women had time to do anything that may have resembled recreation. In 1858, Mrs Isabella Ramsay's minister husband was away in Scotland for some months. During that time, Isabella wrote a diary. The repetition of entries is sobering and indicative of the all-encompassing task of mothering.

In Andrew Ramsay's absence, Isabella had three children to cook for and feed. She could not afford to pay for a servant without her husband's income. She then had to do her own washing after her reliable washerwoman left to marry. Mrs Ramsay's daily activities were a combination of: washing, drying, starching, ironing, cleaning her home, cleaning the Scots' Church, mending, sorting, cooking, sewing and singing hymns. Somehow she fitted in charitable visiting on the poor of the parish. One day the kitchen caught fire but the resourceful Isabella managed to extinguish it and restore order to her home. Otherwise, her main challenges seemed to be keeping her youngest, very irritable, toddler under control enough to get to church, while getting his flannels (nappies) washed and dried daily by dinner time.

This snapshot of nineteenth century birth and parenting during the administration of C.J. La Trobe and beyond gives a mixed impression of expectation, anticipation, joy, loss, grief and in some cases, tedium and ill-health. It is clear that the bearing and rearing of babies in the nineteenth century was no easy thing. In the nineteenth century, life was less predictable and nature could be cruel. The perspectives of women and men combined offer a realistic and more expansive view of the everyday challenges that families faced. These are also a reminder that men and women of nineteenth century Australia in many cases shared these everyday challenges.

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  - 2 See Madonna Grehan, "'Safely Delivered': insights into late nineteenth-century Australian maternity care from coronial investigations into maternal deaths", eds. J Greenlees and L Bryder, *Western Medicine and Maternity, 1880-1990*, Pickering & Chatto: Oxford, 2013, pp.13-29.
  - 3 Lucy Frost has analysed many of the available sources authored by women. See: *No Place for a Nervous Lady: voices from the Australian bush*, Melbourne: McPhee Gribble/Penguin, 1984; *A Face in the Glass; the journal and life of Annie Baxter Daubin*, Port Melbourne: William Heinemann Australia, 1992.
  - 4 Grehan, 'Safely Delivered', pp.16-19.
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  - 6 Frank Strahan, 'Graham, James (1819-1989)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/graham-james-3650/text5689>, published in hardcopy 1972 (accessed 6 June 2013).
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- 16 Ibid. Entry for 27 May 1856.
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- 19 Ibid, p.363. Entry for August 1861.
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- 21 Ibid.
- 22 Selby, Correspondence, Letter 9 to her mother, 15 December 1848.
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- 30 Ibid. Entry for 13 November 1846.
- 31 Holloway Family Papers, Correspondence File, MS 12623, Box 3448/3, Letter from Jane Holloway to her sister, Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria, 1 February 1867.
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- 33 Ibid. Letter from Sally Bunbury to R.C. Sconce, 31 August 1841.
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- 36 Violet McComb, Letters, 1853–1862, MS 12967, Letter to her brother George Stevenson, Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria, 20 May 1857.
- 37 Captain Charles Swanston, Manuscript, MS 12284, Box 1829, Item 11, Letter from Kinnear Swanston to Captain Charles Swanston, Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria, 24 July 1846.

# *La Trobe's other library: Charles La Trobe, Redmond Barry and the Library of the Supreme Court of Victoria*

By Dr Sue Reynolds

Sue Reynolds is an academic in Information Management at RMIT University, Melbourne. She completed her PhD thesis on the history of the Library of the Supreme Court of Victoria through Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga, and was awarded her doctorate in 2009. The thesis was awarded the American Library Association's Phyllis Dain Library History Dissertation Award and has since been published as *Books for the Profession: the Library of the Supreme Court of Victoria* (Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2013). Sue commenced her professional career as a teacher-librarian with the Victorian Department of Education before moving to California to complete a Masters degree in Library Science at San Jose State University, where she was also a graduate assistant teaching cataloguing. She has also worked as an editor for the Victorian Department of Education's Library Branch, as a library technician educator and has taught cataloguing in Vietnam at Can Tho and Thai Nguyen Universities. She is currently on the Editorial Board for the *Australian Library Journal*.

Sue's main academic interests are the history of libraries, information organisation and education for information management. She has published widely on these themes and presented papers at both domestic and international conferences.

This address was given as the C J La Trobe Society lecture on 18 July 2014 at 401 Collins Street during Melbourne Rare Book Week. It is presented as a series of four vignettes derived from previously published research into the history of the Library of the Supreme Court of Victoria. Redmond Barry, Supreme Court judge, was the library's founder but its existence could not have been achieved without the approval and support of Lieutenant-Governor Charles Joseph La Trobe during the period 1851-1854. The vignettes focus on Charles La Trobe's involvement with the library at various stages of its establishment and development in the 1850s and on his relationship with Redmond Barry.

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If you enter the Supreme Court of Victoria at 210 William Street, Melbourne, pass successfully through the airport-type security check, cross the internal corridor and the blue-stone carriage way and are bold enough to push open the doors marked clearly in gold lettering 'Private. No Entry' you will find yourself in the magnificent ground-floor reading room of the Supreme Court Library. Although the library owes its origins to

Supreme Court Judge Redmond Barry and Lieutenant-Governor Charles Joseph La Trobe, the subjects of this article, neither man ever set foot in it. Charles Joseph La Trobe left the Colony of Victoria in 1854, thirty years before the Supreme Court buildings in William Street were opened; and although Sir Redmond Barry was involved in the concept, design and building of the new court precinct he died in 1880 before the courts were completed and occupied.

The Supreme Court Library was established in the old Supreme Court, which was located on the corner of La Trobe (named for Charles La Trobe in 1839) and Russell Streets. The various buildings of the original Supreme Court of Victoria were demolished in 1910 and replaced by the City Court building (later called the Magistrates' Court),<sup>1</sup> now part of RMIT University. Charles La Trobe's involvement with the Supreme Court Library is from the library's

1839, just six weeks after thirty-eight year old La Trobe. Redmond Barry had originally landed in Sydney from England but, facing a tarnished reputation there as a consequence of an inappropriate romantic entanglement on board ship which continued on arrival in the settlement, he moved on quite quickly. He travelled to Melbourne with James Croke who had been a fellow passenger on the voyage from England and who had been appointed



Photographer unknown  
The old Supreme Court, Melbourne, c.1900  
Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria, H3618

most likely foundation date in 1853 to the date of his departure from the Colony of Victoria in May 1854, and although this is not a very long period of time he was inextricably connected with it and with its founder Redmond Barry.

To follow is a series of four vignettes each presenting a discrete aspect of Charles Joseph La Trobe's involvement with Redmond Barry and the establishment and development of the Library of the Supreme Court of Victoria. Within this context the vignettes focus on the personal connections between La Trobe and Barry, the establishment of the library as an entity, the provision of space in the Supreme Court buildings for the library, and a rift in Barry and La Trobe's relationship in La Trobe's final months in the colony.

### ***Vignette 1: Connections***

Redmond Barry and Charles Joseph La Trobe were on friendly terms throughout La Trobe's fifteen-year officialdom in colonial Australia, where he was initially the Superintendent of the District of Port Phillip and then, after Separation, Lieutenant-Governor of the Colony of Victoria. Barry, aged twenty-six, arrived in the three-year-old settlement in

Clerk of the Crown to give legal advice to Superintendent La Trobe. Croke introduced Redmond Barry to La Trobe. Ann Galbally, in her biography of Redmond Barry, describes Barry and La Trobe as being compatible in their interests in horse riding, music and the social life of their new home.<sup>2</sup>

Redmond Barry and Charles La Trobe were also together involved with many of the early cultural and social institutions in Melbourne: La Trobe was the first patron of the Melbourne Mechanics' Institute (now The Melbourne Athenaeum) when it was founded towards the end of 1839 and Barry was on the Committee of Management; both were involved with the Melbourne Hospital, founded in 1846 and opened in 1848, the same year in which the Horticultural Society was formed with La Trobe as its patron and Barry as Vice-President; La Trobe was again the patron and Barry the first president of the Royal Philharmonic, established in 1853; and Charles La Trobe appointed Barry the first Chairman of the Trustees of the Melbourne Public Library, and the first Chancellor of the University of Melbourne.

Prior to Separation from New South Wales, the Anglo-Irish settlers in Port Phillip

could foresee that ‘for all their crudity, monotony, and lack of polite society, the colonies offered the great gifts of freedom and prosperity’.<sup>3</sup> This was certainly true for Charles Joseph La Trobe and his closest associates, including Redmond Barry. On Separation, La Trobe appointed William Stawell as the first Attorney-General for the new Colony of Victoria and Redmond Barry as Solicitor-General, against the wishes of Earl Grey, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, who preferred James Croke. Stawell and Barry were made members of the Executive

Australia, Van Diemen’s Land and Victoria but was parochially known in Victoria as the ‘Separation Act’. The Supreme Court of New South Wales continued to administer justice in the Colony of Victoria after Separation until the passing of the Supreme Court Act and formation of the Supreme Court of the Colony of Victoria in 1852.

Section 32 of the Supreme Court Act<sup>7</sup> is germane to the establishment of the Supreme Court Library. It empowered the Victorian



**John Botterill, 1817–1881, artist**  
**Charles Joseph La Trobe, 1866 (detail)**

Watercolour, gouache and gum arabic  
Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria, H2  
Watercolour, gouache and gum arabic over  
albumen silver photograph  
Based on Sir Francis Grant’s portrait in oils of 1855



**Photographer unknown**  
**Redmond Barry, 1813–1880, c.1860**  
Private Collection, with permission

Council and La Trobe solicited them to report on the future of the judiciary in the colony. Their *Report on the Administration of Justice at Separation*<sup>4</sup> presented a clear need for a Supreme Court for Victoria, rather than a shared court in distant New South Wales, and in January 1852 the Act for the Better Administration of Justice in the Colony of Victoria,<sup>5</sup> also known as the Supreme Court Act, established the Supreme Court of the Colony of Victoria and engendered Rules and Regulations for it. These Rules and Regulations included provision for a library for the legal profession.

It seems a magnanimous act by Redmond Barry to seek to establish a separate library for the ordinary legal practitioner in the courthouse in Melbourne when there was already a judges’ library for his own use. But Barry was very aware of the need for such a library based on his use of law libraries in Ireland and England and he solicited the support of Charles La Trobe as Lieutenant-Governor to progress his plans.

### ***Vignette 2: Establishment of the library***

The 1850 Act for the Better Government of Her Majesty’s Australian Colonies<sup>6</sup> dealt with the colonies of South Australia, Western

Supreme Court to make rules for barristers, attorneys, solicitors and proctors, pertaining to, amongst other things: their admission, their qualifications, examinations, fees and costs, and the ‘mode of application’ of the fees and costs paid. The Rules and Regulations<sup>8</sup> included Rule 25, which provided a ‘Table of Fees’ indicating how much was to be paid on admission, and Rule 27, which stated that all such funds were to ‘be lodged ... on account of the Supreme Court Library Fund’. Thus, from 1853 to the present day new legal practitioners have come to the library to pay a fee directly to the Library Fund as decreed. Rule 29 provided that ‘All such Fees [were to] be applied to the purchase and maintenance of a Library, for the use of the said Supreme Court’, Rule 30 established that there would be a Library Committee and Rule 15 specified the texts from which the Board of Examiners was to derive questions for candidates for admission to practise in the legal profession. These books were to be included in the Library’s collection and form a part of the Library’s holdings today.

It was perhaps with deliberate intent that Redmond Barry wrote the report, at La Trobe’s behest, that called for a Supreme Court in the new colony of Victoria after Separation and

which then allowed him to draft the rules which included provision for a library. These rules linger to the present day and have sometimes been referred to as ‘Barry’s rules’ since there was little interference from anyone else in either their writing or enactment.

The announcement of the discovery of gold in Victoria and Separation in 1851 were almost simultaneous. The ‘tiny educated elite’<sup>9</sup> responsible for the government of the colony worked to develop a governmental and financial infrastructure but new Lieutenant-Governor La Trobe had a propensity for verbally approving activities in the rapidly developing colony before providing written authorisation. This caused some disorder and fostered a similar predisposition in Redmond Barry who also often acted before seeking official sanction.

The founding of the Library of the Supreme Court exemplifies this tendency and makes a definite date for the Library’s establishment impossible to determine. The preface of the first *Catalogue of the Library of the Supreme Court of Victoria*, from its tone almost certainly written by Redmond Barry, begins with the words ‘The Library of the Supreme Court of Victoria was established in the year 1854’.<sup>10</sup> But Barry also personally dated the establishment of the Library to 1851 when he said at the opening of the Sandhurst Circuit Court in 1860 that ‘The Library of the Supreme Court in Melbourne was, as you have doubtless been informed, established in ... 1851, but it was not until ... 1854, that any of the books were placed on the shelves.’<sup>11</sup> News of Royal Assent to the Act to separate Port Phillip from New South Wales was received in Melbourne on 11 November, 1850 and pride in the new colony may well have been the impetus for Barry to begin to act on an idea he brought with him from Ireland and England.

Notification of a library for the Supreme Court of Victoria was publicly announced in 1853 when *The Argus* reported that the Acting Chief Justice, Redmond Barry, had indicated that the ‘prospects of a Law Library were now very favourable’. The ‘gentlemen of both professions’ (that is, barristers and solicitors) were invited to send ‘a list of such books as they deemed most suitable for a place in the intended library’.<sup>12</sup> Seven weeks later Redmond Barry advertised in *The Argus* for two members of the Bar and two ‘of the other profession’ to meet with him ‘this day’ to determine a selection of law books for ‘the contemplated law library for the use of the profession’. He announced that he already had £296 and £200 to come for ‘the nucleus of a valuable library being made’.<sup>13</sup> This was a substantial amount of money to be spent

and with the authority of being Acting Chief Justice (while William a’Beckett was on sick leave in England), and compelled by his own forceful personality, Barry wanted the list of books to be prepared immediately – ‘this day’. And while the books were being purchased and despatched to Melbourne Redmond Barry set to work to petition Lieutenant-Governor La Trobe for assistance with preparations for their arrival.



Artist unknown  
Redmond Barry, c.1853  
Lithograph

Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria, H5369

### *Vignette 3: A room for a library*

Before any meeting of a Library Committee had been held, Barry wrote to the Colonial Secretary requesting permission from Lieutenant-Governor La Trobe to use a room in the courthouse to accommodate the new library. Barry’s request was quickly granted by La Trobe and the first Library Committee minuted that a letter be sent to thank the Lieutenant-Governor for ‘having allowed the small room in the Supreme Court to be appropriated as a temporary library’.<sup>14</sup> *The Argus* described the room allocated to hold the ‘voluminous’ collection of law books as ‘a small cell, contiguous to the court, generally used for the reception of female prisoners. When a couple of women and a policeman are stationed in it, the room is considered over-crowded’.<sup>15</sup>

The Library Committee also requested ‘suitable Book shelves be put in the Room without delay’<sup>16</sup> to house the expected arrival of the first 496 volumes; four additional bookstands were ordered with ‘the special sanction of His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor’.<sup>17</sup> It would seem from the many follow-up enquiries made by Barry about these bookstands that they may never have eventuated, and a sketch drawn by Barry to accompany the order appears to be no longer extant; however, they are described in some detail: ‘each to be supported on a turned

Leg or standard, and at a height convenient for persons standing to read at' and each to have 'four light frames, or Desks, to support Books, inclined at a suitable angle the sides being made so as to let down, and the stand so balanced as to support itself should only one side be in use, and the top being sufficiently large to admit of two Ink bottles let into the frame and also pens, pencils etc. standing thereon'.<sup>18</sup>

Their Honors the Judges have their seats raised on a height almost on a level to the galleries, whilst a magnificent canopy of cedar is to be raised over the learned judges' heads. The body of the court is assigned for the bar and the legal profession only. The



Engraver unknown  
The Kelly trial – the scene in court, 1880

Wood engraving  
The Illustrated Australian News, November 6, 1880  
Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria, IAN06/11/80/201

The courthouse in which the library was located had been designed by Clerk of Works James Rattenbury ten years prior to the library's founding. Governor Gipps in New South Wales refused to approve the initial plans for the courthouse which he considered was 'not only unnecessarily—but very inconveniently, large', with front and back verandahs 'extremely & unnecessarily expensive'.<sup>19</sup> He directed La Trobe to have the plans revised and La Trobe instructed Rattenbury to do so, although it was reported in the *Port Phillip Patriot* that revisions to the original drawings were 'the production of the pencil of his Honour the Superintendent',<sup>20</sup> that is, Superintendent La Trobe. La Trobe authorised building to commence but to his mortification, after the foundation stone had been laid with great ceremony, Governor Gipps again made objections to the size and design. The working drawings were eventually sanctioned by Gipps, reluctantly but without further revision, and the court house opened in 1843.

After La Trobe's departure from the colony the 'unnecessarily [and] inconveniently large' courtroom was transformed to accommodate not only the courtroom but also rooms for robing, witnesses, prisoners and a new room for the library. The altered interior was described in *The Argus*:

prisoners' box is to be placed at one side, instead of as formerly facing their Honors. The jury are to be accommodated in a box immediately opposite the prisoners, while the representatives of the press are not forgotten, as boxes have been allotted to them in a line adjoining the Judges' Associates ... The public generally will be excluded from the body of the court, but will find ample accommodation in the galleries.<sup>21</sup>

The *Australian Jurist* reported on the difficulty of attending the library when the court was sitting:

To gain access to either of the robing-rooms, or to the library it is necessary to push one's way through the avenues of the over-crowded court. In the latter instance (the library) it is necessary during the criminal sittings, to pass between the dock, and the judge, the bar and the jury to the great distraction and annoyance of all.<sup>22</sup>



Photographer unknown  
Judge R W Pohlman, 1872  
Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria,  
H96.160/1782

This is the courtroom depicted in a well-known contemporary wood engraving illustrating the trial of Ned Kelly in the Supreme Court of Victoria in 1880<sup>23</sup> (and also in a photograph held by the Royal Historical Society of Victoria<sup>24</sup>) and thus it is the library that is located, tantalisingly not visible, beyond the curtained doorway.

A final note on the new courtroom: in 1855 Redmond Barry was sitting in court when the magnificent canopy towering above him (described earlier) began to collapse. Barry removed himself from danger with some alacrity and observed that 'he would prefer sitting under the drawn sword of Damocles, to sitting under such a weight of tottering cedar'.<sup>25</sup> The canopy and other interior fittings were removed from the court when it was demolished in 1910 and reinstated in the Magistrates' Court, built on the same site and opened in 1914. This is now Court 2 in RMIT's Building 20.

#### ***Vignette 4: A rift in the friendship***

Satisfaction with the original large courthouse did not last long, with demands on its use heavy as crime increased following the discovery of gold in the colony. Acting Chief Justice Redmond Barry wrote to the colonial secretary to bring to the attention of Lieutenant-Governor La Trobe 'the urgent and pressing necessity which exists for increased accommodation in the offices of the Supreme Court' and as usual he had a suggestion for a resolution of the perceived problem.<sup>26</sup> He now asked for another court to be built west of the existing courthouse (on La Trobe Street towards Swanston Street), 'connected with it by a Hall behind which may be arranged a Library and offices'. This request had as an ulterior motive

the desire to thwart alternative usage of the same piece of land for a court for the County Court judges, with Barry's attitude fuelled by a deeply held grudge against County Court judge Robert Pohlman in particular.

Pohlman had arrived in Melbourne a year after Barry and became his junior. In 1852 Barry was appointed the first puisne judge of the Supreme Court of Victoria and Pohlman the first judge in the County Court and in 1853 both were considered for the position of Acting Chief Justice while William a'Beckett was on leave. Redmond Barry received the appointment; with Governor La Trobe suggesting that Pohlman 'lacked experience and had a peremptory manner'.<sup>27</sup>

During 1853, Acting Chief Justice Barry wrote often to La Trobe to complain about usage of the courthouse by the inferior County Court without the permission of the Supreme Court judges, and about perceived discourtesies to the judiciary, especially those perpetrated by Pohlman. Complaints about Robert Pohlman are detailed in a series of letters to Charles La Trobe initially and then to Charles Hotham after La Trobe's departure from the colony. Redmond Barry was not a man to be easily dispensed with and one letter in reply to his complaints has been extensively and carefully reworded by the colonial secretary before mailing, and the copy marked 'To be carefully kept'.<sup>28</sup>

Barry wrote to La Trobe specifically requesting clarification of the official style by which the judges of the County Court should be addressed, apropos of Pohlman's insistence that he be called 'Your Honor', as were the judges in the Supreme Court. Barry told La Trobe that he was 'personally ... completely indifferent to the subject'<sup>29</sup> but he obviously was not since when La Trobe ruled that the term of address for the inferior court should be 'Your Worship', and Pohlman continued to answer to 'Your Honour', Barry instigated an intense barrage of correspondence regarding the matter, complaining of Pohlman's 'open disregard of the express direction of His Excellency and a complete indifference to his command'.<sup>30</sup>

La Trobe agreed with Barry and Pohlman was informed of the ruling. Barry also wrote to Robert Pohlman, expressing his anticipation that Pohlman would pay 'suitable deference' to the Lieutenant-Governor's opinion and 'take the necessary steps to prevent the repetition of the irregularity to which [he had] been reluctantly compelled to allude'.<sup>31</sup> Barry opined that Pohlman would now understand 'the true position of the County Courts, and the Supreme



Court in relation, one to the other' and that 'the public business will be best Carried on by a good understanding subsisting between those engaged in discharging judicial duties in each'. However, Pohlman did not comply with either La Trobe's direction or Barry's expectation and the proscribed practice continued. Barry was predictably incensed and again wrote to La Trobe in reference to 'a subject which [he] had considered completely at rest'<sup>32</sup>; that is 'the assumption by the Judge of an inferior Court to a Title distinctively applied to a judge presiding in the Supreme Court'. Barry wrote that not only was Pohlman's 'conduct unbecoming towards the judges of the Supreme Court, it now presents itself in the additional light of an open disregard of the express direction of His Excellency, and a complete indifference to his commands'.<sup>33</sup> Barry stated that he did 'not suppose that His Excellency will permit any Gentleman so lightly to esteem his Authority' and requested that he give further directions, recommending that this be done via the *Victoria Government Gazette*.

Lieutenant-Governor La Trobe complied with Barry's recommendation and the *Gazette* carried the notice that:

In order to remove an erroneous impression which has prevailed as the proper Title of Judges of the Inferior Courts, the Lieutenant-Governor directs it to be notified that until Her Majesty's pleasure be known, the Title of Judge of a County Court ... shall be that of 'Your Worship,' or 'His Worship,' ... The Titles of 'Your Honor,' and 'His Honor,' ... can not properly be assumed by or accorded to any other office.<sup>34</sup>

A précis of the extensive correspondence (presumably produced at the direction of the Colonial Secretary to brief Charles Hotham,

La Trobe's successor), reveals La Trobe's annoyance with Barry's interference. The Supreme Court judge's grievance was considered by La Trobe to have been 'remonstrated with a warmth conceived ... to be greater than the importance of the case' and he 'declined to continue a correspondence which had assumed on the part of (Barry), some degree of asperity'.<sup>35</sup>

Pohlman noted in his diary only that 'The Colonial Secretary calls my attention to the Government Gazette, notifying that I am to be addressed as 'your Worship' and not 'your Honor' and that he had 'Read it in the Court'.<sup>36</sup> There is no other mention in Pohlman's diary regarding the issue, or any another concerning himself and Redmond Barry. Barry, on the other hand, continued to feel aggrieved and punished Pohlman and the other County Court judges by continually refusing, until his death, any petition for the Library of the Supreme Court to be used by them, since, as Barry's rules stated, the library was for the use of the Supreme Court only.

## Conclusion

Although the doors to the Library of the Supreme Court still decree 'Private. No entry' in accordance with 'Barry's Rules', this proscription is somewhat relaxed in the present day. A request to view the library is likely to be granted and within its walls there are remnants of the original library to be seen: a portrait of Sir William a'Beckett from the old court, the earliest book purchases with their impressive bindings, instructions to replace books on the shelves in the exact wording first composed in 1854, an early annotated swearing-in Bible, and Redmond Barry's court book recording Ned Kelly's sentence. Take in the beauty and ambience of the reading room and remember the role of Charles Joseph La Trobe and Redmond Barry in this beautiful library's founding.

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### Further reading:

By Sue Reynolds

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## Endnotes

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- 3 Patrick O'Farrell, *The Irish in Australia*, Kensington, N.S.W.: New South Wales University Press, 1986, p.97.
- 4 William F. Stawell and Redmond Barry, 'An Official Report on the Administration of Justice at Separation', September 29, 1851, in J.M. Bennett and Alex C. Castles, eds., *A Source Book of Australian Legal History: source materials from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries*, Sydney: Law Book Company, 1979, pp.134-138.
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- 13 *Ibid.*, May 13, 1853, p.7d.
- 14 Redmond Barry to Colonial Secretary, April 7, 1854, Outward Letter Book of Sir Redmond Barry, VPRS 830/P0000/1, Public Record Office of Victoria.
- 15 *The Argus*, March 28, 1854, p.5c.
- 16 Redmond Barry to Colonial Secretary, April 7, 1854, Outward Letter Book of Sir Redmond Barry, VPRS 830/P0000/1, Public Record Office of Victoria.
- 17 *Ibid.*, Redmond Barry to Civil Commissariat, May 12, 1854.
- 18 *Ibid.*
- 19 Governor George Gipps to Superintendent Charles La Trobe, August 27, 1842, in Shaw, A.G.L., ed., *Gipps-La Trobe Correspondence: 1839-1846*, Carlton: Melbourne University Press at the Miegunyah Press, 1989, p.161.
- 20 *Port Phillip Patriot*, vol.5, no.387, August 25, 1842, p.2e.
- 21 *The Argus*, January 19, 1855, p.5g.
- 22 *Australian Jurist*, vol.1, no.2, February 28, 1870, p.iii.
- 23 'The Kelly Trial – the scene in court', *Illustrated Australian News*, 6 November 1880, p.202.
- 24 'Interior View of the Supreme Court'. D-919, Royal Historical Society of Victoria.
- 25 *The Argus*, March 28, 1855, p.6a.
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- 27 Suzanne G. Mellor, 'Pohlman, Robert Williams (1811-1877)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Canberra: National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/pohlman-robert-williams-4407/text7189>, published in hardcopy 1974 (accessed 19 August 2014)
- 28 Colonial Secretary to Redmond Barry, September [?], 1853, corrected copy dated September 28, 1853, Inward Registered Correspondence 1, VPRS 1189/0000/124, Public Record Office of Victoria. Barry often used his rank as Acting Chief Justice in order to have his demands satisfied but even when no longer in that position he continued to be extremely conscious of his own importance writing to the Colonial Engineer in 1855 to instruct him to remove two of the large chairs in the courthouse which were being used by the Sheriff and Prothonotary [principal clerk] since they 'are of the same size and Pattern as those of the Judges and quite unsuitable for the purpose. Two others smaller and more simple should be substituted.' Redmond Barry to Colonial Engineer, February 12, 1855, Outward Letter Book of Sir Redmond Barry, VPRS 830/P0000/1, Public record Office of Victoria.
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# La Trobe and the Pre-Raphaelites: launching a brilliant career in Melbourne, 1853

By Caroline Clemente

Caroline Clemente is a Melbourne art historian and freelance curator. After completing studies at the Courtauld Institute of Art, she pursued postgraduate studies in Florence while working at the Uffizi and Pitti Galleries and at Villa I Tatti, the Harvard Center for Renaissance Studies. Returning to Australia, she tutored in the Fine Arts Department at the University of Melbourne, followed by ten years as Curator of Prints and Drawings at the National Gallery of Victoria. She is author of *Australian Watercolours in the National Gallery of Victoria, 1802-1926*, and the 'Catalogue of Plates' for Brenda Niall's biography of Georgiana McCrae. In 2007 with a State Library of Victoria Creative Fellowship, her research focused on the contribution of early settlers to Melbourne's cultural identity during the La Trobe era. In the field of colonial art and cultural history, she has contributed to journals and exhibition catalogues published by the State Library of Victoria and the National Gallery of Victoria and most recently, to the exhibition catalogue of *Auld Lang Syne: images of Scottish Australia* at the Art Gallery of Ballarat.

In June, 2014, she completed an Honorary La Trobe Fellowship at the State Library of Victoria, researching the Australian period of the Pre-Raphaelite artist, Thomas Woolner. With her colleague, Barbara Kane, she is compiling a catalogue raisonnée of Woolner's portraits in preparation for an exhibition to be held at the National Portrait Gallery, Canberra, in 2017.

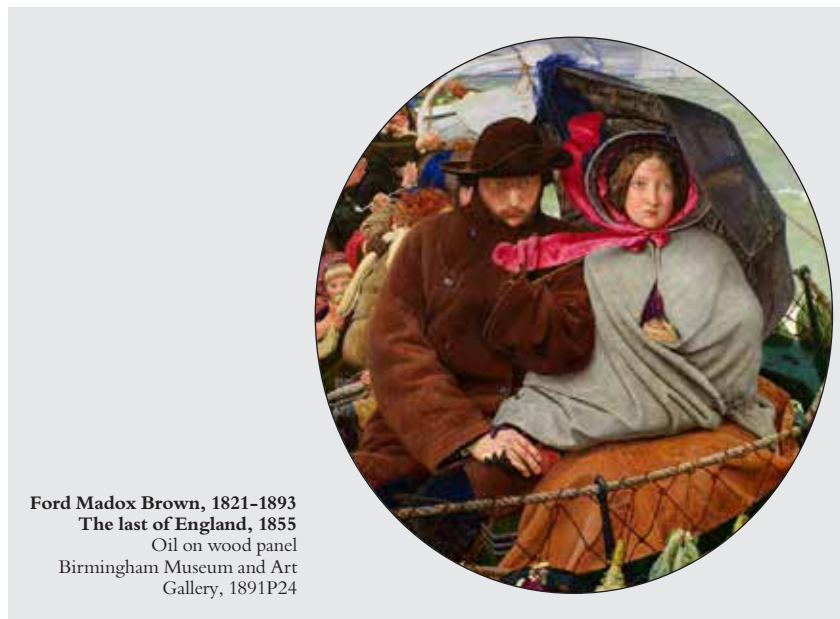
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The departure of Thomas Woolner for the Australian gold fields in 1852 inspired one of Britain's most popular paintings. Woolner, a sculptor, was farewelled from Gravesend by his 'Pre-Raphaelite Brothers' and other artistic sympathisers such as Ford Madox Brown, creator of *The Last of England*, of 1855. However, unlike the painting's pungent title, this was very far from being the last of Woolner. On the contrary as I will argue here, Melbourne turned out to be the launching pad of Thomas Woolner's brilliant career.<sup>1</sup>

Madox Brown and his wife are the subjects of *The Last of England* since during most of its long, painstaking gestation, Woolner was in the Australian colonies. But the intense, brooding expression on the young man's face in the painting may well have been suggested by Woolner's dramatic personality. Flamboyant, funny, extremely opinionated and fiercely committed to his art, these traits are brilliantly captured in a sketch of him in his studio by Dante Gabriel Rossetti who first introduced Woolner to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in 1847. Among this group of young artists,

writers and poets, he was the only sculptor. During the first half of the nineteenth century, sculptural commissions were very thin on the ground in Britain and though highly skilled and fully qualified, Woolner had a terrible struggle finding work. However, in the second half of the century, he was to become one of Victorian Britain's leading sculptors and the path to that stellar future began at the height of the gold rush in Melbourne in 1852.<sup>2</sup>

Proof that La Trobe was well aware of this new movement is the fact that he owned a small imaginative figure by Thomas Woolner. *Little Red Riding Hood*, reproduced for the mass market by Copeland in Parian ware, a type of porcelain, dates from about 1849, well before Woolner arrived in Melbourne. This charming figurine which reflects Woolner's delicacy of touch and imagination, is indicative of La Trobe's taste. Highly cultivated and seriously



**Ford Madox Brown, 1821-1893**  
**The last of England, 1855**  
 Oil on wood panel  
 Birmingham Museum and Art  
 Gallery, 1891P24

Somehow, in this desperate, muddy dustbowl at the end of the earth, the Lieutenant-Governor of Victoria, Charles Joseph La Trobe managed to keep up with current artistic trends in Britain. He was aware of the group of 'Young Turks' who were challenging the London art establishment, still overshadowed by the great eighteenth century president of the Royal Academy, 'silly old Sir Slossua', as they jeeringly dubbed Sir Joshua Reynolds.<sup>3</sup> The term, Pre-Raphaelite, referred to early Italian Renaissance painting. In the later fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, this style had been succeeded by increasingly elaborate compositions of High Renaissance artists like Michelangelo and Raphael. The British Pre-Raphaelite Brethren who affixed PRB to their signatures, aimed to revive the flat surfaces, bright colours and simpler forms of the first half of fifteenth century art. Their central credo was 'truth to nature' and they took this principle to extremes in trying to reproduce actual appearances as faithfully as possible. In the early 1850s, they were the avant-garde of London's art world. While the influence of the Pre-Raphaelites on British art was to grow and last for the rest of the century, at that point they were almost unknown and pilloried by contemporary critics.<sup>4</sup>

interested in the arts, he was a published author and an accomplished amateur artist. Not only did he paint and sketch, he was also a discerning collector who tried to encourage local talent. In the pre-gold rush Port Phillip Settlement, he had commissioned works by its only resident artists: portraits of his daughters by Georgiana McCrae, the professionally trained miniaturist, and delightful views of his Jolimont house and garden by George Alexander Gilbert of c.1843.<sup>5</sup>

Although some of his small fancy figures like *Little Red Riding Hood* and *Puck*, inspired by Shakespeare's character, had proved popular, like most British sculptors at that period, Woolner was financial insecure. Unsurprisingly, his grand ambitions to produce ideal works with universal themes inspired by history or literature or elevating moral subjects, did not result in paying commissions. So, when news of the gold discoveries in Australia reached Britain, the enticing vision of a quick fortune to be dug out of the ground proved irresistible.<sup>6</sup>

Woolner set off for Melbourne with two artist companions: Bernhard Smith, another well-regarded sculptor and Edward La Trobe Bateman, a brilliant draftsman and designer who, though not a Pre-Raphaelite, described himself

as a 'sympathiser'. Most significantly, Bateman was Charles Joseph La Trobe's first cousin and the connection was to prove a crucial one from Woolner's point of view. Within days of arriving on 25 October 1852, a surprised and delighted Woolner wrote to his father from the Quaker Dr Godfrey Howitt's house at the south-eastern corner of Collins and Spring Streets:



**Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 1828-1882**  
**Thomas Woolner in his studio, 1850**  
 Pen and ink on paper  
 Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery,  
 1904P368

I am here safe at last... I am staying at the above address and receive every kindness possible for a human being to have from another... Bateman sleeps at His Excellency's, Mr La Trobe's, to give more convenience to us. We have to dine with that great man today: he wants to know me because Bateman found that my little figure of Red Riding Hood was one of his favourite ornaments and told him that I did it: he says "I must not leave the Colony without doing something in the fine arts first..."<sup>7</sup>

After seven months' hard slog on the gold fields, neither Woolner nor his friends were any the richer. In fact, he calculated that while he had earned £50, his expenses had amounted to £80. Despite concluding by mid-May 1853, that no sparkling fortune was to be made that way and that life should be tried in other forms, Woolner had really fallen on his feet in Melbourne. The Howitt family belonged to the small inner circle of La Trobe's most intimate friends. Godfrey Howitt was personal physician to La Trobe's delicate, ailing wife, Sophie, who was in turn, a close friend of the doctor's wife, Phoebe. Their only daughter, Edith, had shared a French

speaking governess with La Trobe's two younger daughters, Eleonara and Cécile.<sup>8</sup>

Typically, Woolner had immediately turned the connection with La Trobe through his friendship with Bateman to advantage. Having returned from the gold fields, he wrote to his father on 16 May 1853:

I have come to Melbourne to work at my art. There is every prospect of my doing well, as I have powerful friends who are anxious to aid me in every way. I am staying at Dr Howitt's and the kindness of his family to me is wonderful. I have executed a medallion of the Doctor, one of His Excellency and another of little Charles Howitt. They all give great satisfaction here and you will see what the newspaper says which I send you.<sup>9</sup>

Surprisingly, this medallion of La Trobe is only one of two portraits of him dating from nearly fifteen years in Victoria. However, Woolner was renowned for his outstanding ability to capture a striking physical likeness while also suggesting the inner life of his sitters. This quality has been singled out by Benedict Read, the authoritative writer on Victorian British sculpture, who rates Woolner's accuracy in modelling realistic detail as being 'without parallel amongst his peers'. We can be confident that along with Woolner's other Australian portraits, this is a faithful representation. For the same reason, Peter Corlett kept a version of the medallion in his studio when he was creating the first free-standing statue of the Lieutenant-Governor for the La Trobe Society in 2006.<sup>10</sup>

Why Woolner chose these low-relief, profile medallions in plaster for his colonial portraits rather than more conventional free-standing busts in bronze or marble, is an interesting question in itself. The short answer is cost and convenience: plaster is much less expensive than bronze or marble and a profile portrait is quickly worked compared with a sculpture in the round. From Woolner's point of view, these medallions had further advantages: they were compact – the average diameter being twenty-one centimetres – and therefore easily transportable; they could be reproduced in different media any number of times and, best of all, charged for each time.<sup>11</sup>

Before the mid-1850s when photography became widely accessible to the public, portraitists, and miniaturists especially, did a

healthy trade. Individually executed portraits were the only way to record someone's likeness and, of course, Woolner's profile portraits did exactly that. However, the format itself, reminiscent of emperors' profiles on antique coins and medallions, lent his subjects a flattering aura of patrician reserve and distinction. During the nineteenth century, it was fashionable for people to acquire likenesses of admired public figures in the form of paintings, sculptures or reproductive prints. So it is not surprising that in addition to their own family portraits, the Howitts owned a plaster medallion of their friend, Charles La Trobe, and that later they also commissioned a bronze version of it from Woolner after his return to London.

Woolner had quickly realised that his plaster portraits, finished works of art in their own right and available for purchase on the spot, were a marketable proposition in the colonies. In fact, he wrote to his father: 'I get £25 for a medallion here. In England they wouldn't give me 25 pence'. The Howitts, who did such an excellent job in promoting his cause, lent portraits of themselves and of their friend La Trobe to the first two public art exhibitions held in Melbourne in 1853 and 1854. At the same time, Woolner also kept his own version of these works which he took back to England when he left the colony. Colonial sitters could then commission bronze casts from him in London at a cost of £25 each. Phoebe Howitt wrote to her daughter, Edith, absent in the country in 1855, that she had sent £125 to Woolner for bronze portrait medallions: these were of her husband, the pendant of herself and of two of her children, Edith and Charles. The fifth bronze of Charles La Trobe remains in the hands of Howitt descendants to this day.<sup>12</sup>

Despite the scurrilous treatment of him in the press, La Trobe had many friends and was widely respected for his unassailable personal integrity. An indication of this is to be found in an *Argus* advertisement of 26 December 1855, announcing the arrival of 'bronze medallions of the former Lieutenant-Governor by T. Woolner which subscribers could collect from W. Baker's Church of England Book Depot at 71 Swanston Street'.<sup>13</sup> In fact, of all Woolner's Australian portraits, the medallions of La Trobe and William Charles Wentworth of Sydney were the most popular. The existence of multiple versions of both in public and private collections today is evidence of this and of Woolner's well-developed commercial sense.

Between the Melbourne medallions of 1853 and those of Sydney in 1854, lies a tale of two very different cities, from Woolner's point of view. In Melbourne, after his return from the



**Thomas Woolner, 1825–1892**  
**Little Red Riding Hood, c.1849**

Parian ware  
Private Collection, courtesy of Joanna Barnes  
Fine Arts  
Illustrated in B. Read and J. Barnes (eds),  
Pre-Raphaelite Sculpture: nature and  
imagination in British sculpture 1848–1914, p.143

gold fields, he had been promoted by La Trobe and the Howitts among their circle of friends. He had executed portrait groups such as the family of Captain George Ward Cole, a wealthy, socially prominent merchant and Legislative Council member who owned the landmark, Cole's wharf, at the bottom of Queen's Street. It is instructive to compare Woolner's 1853 portrait of Cole's wife, Thomas Anne, with one executed in 1832 by her sister-in-law, the professionally trained miniaturist Georgiana McCrae. Even allowing for McCrae's tendency to flatter, a comparison with Woolner's medallion shows that the intervening twenty years had not dealt kindly with Thomas Anne. Wickedly dubbed Ward Cole's 'bigger half' by McCrae, it is clear on the other hand that Woolner, having embraced the Pre-Raphaelite credo of 'truth to nature', had made no attempt to 'improve' his sitter's appearance.<sup>14</sup>

Another case in point is the comparison between Woolner's portrait of Edith Howitt, and two miniatures of her by McCrae, one in water colour and the other in pencil. As a photograph of her from around the same time shows, again McCrae has made Edith appear prettier and more fine-boned than she does in the daguerreotype. Woolner had become unofficially engaged to



**Thomas Woolner, 1825-1892**  
**Lieutenant Governor Charles Joseph**  
**La Trobe, 1853**  
 Bronze relief medallion  
 Pictures Collection, State Library of  
 Victoria, H29576



**Thomas Woolner, 1825-1892**  
**Edith Mary Howitt, 1853**  
 Bronze relief medallion  
 National Gallery of Australia, NGA 80.77



**Thomas Woolner, 1825-1892**  
**Sir Charles Fitzroy, 1854**  
 Bronze relief medallion  
 State Library of New South Wales, P\*38



**Thomas Woolner, 1825-1892**  
**William Charles Wentworth, 1854**  
 Bronze relief medallion  
 Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria, H1470

the Howitts' twenty-year-old, only daughter before he left Melbourne for England in 1854. If doubts as to his romantic motives are raised by his observation that her family 'live exactly like rich people do in England', the appearance of a miniature version in ivory of his profile portrait of Edith, indicates that his heart as well as his head may have been involved. This delightful little work nestles in the palm of the hand, its delicacy and diminutive size immediately suggesting a love token. Edith's mother, Phoebe Howitt, was also very taken with the handsome, ebullient young Woolner. An inscription in Woolner's distinctive handwriting in a book belonging to Howitt descendants, reads: 'To my beloved Mrs Howitt', which prompts the speculation as to which of the Howitt ladies he was really more attached.<sup>15</sup>

Other sitters within the La Trobe-Howitt circle were John Pinney Bear and his wife Annette, the first family to own Tabilk (later Chateau Tahbilk) winery, James Clow, the first Presbyterian minister in the Port Phillip District, and the early settler and merchant, Octavius Browne, a founding member of the Melbourne Chamber of Commerce. Although Octavius Browne is listed amongst the Australian medallions in Amy Woolner's biography of

her father, the whereabouts of this portrait has for long remained unknown. Recently, while my colleague, Barbara Kane, and I were working on the Sydney medallions at the State Library of New South Wales, we came across an unidentified portrait dated 1853 which meant that it had to be from Melbourne. The only known likeness of Browne is a fine miniature by Georgiana McCrae dated 1841. While ten years separate these works, the similarity of the shape of the head, the square jaw, the hair and style of beard, strongly suggest that this is Woolner's missing medallion of Octavius Browne.<sup>16</sup>

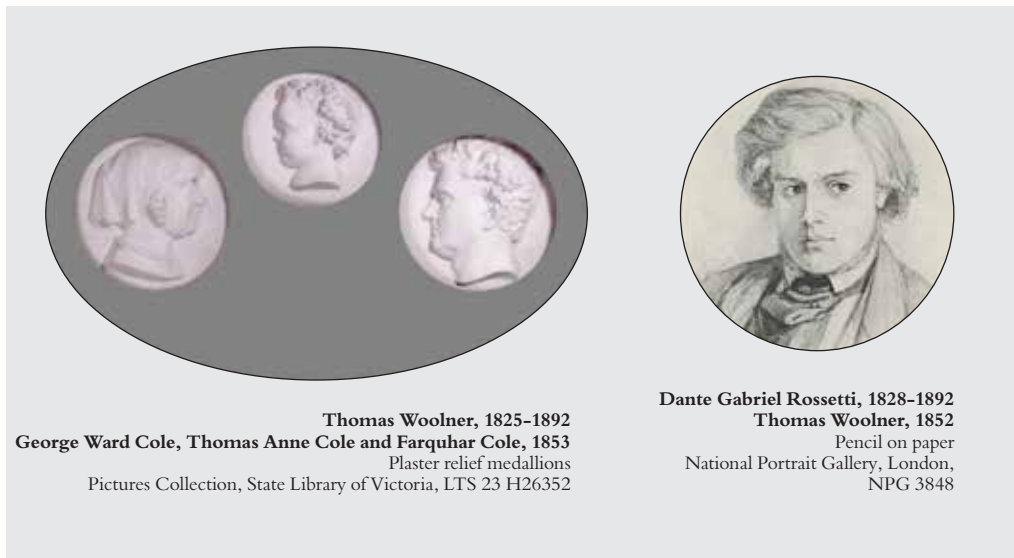
Once more, due to Charles La Trobe and the Howitts, Woolner's Melbourne success followed him to Sydney in January 1854 where he went in search of further commissions. The following circumstances clearly indicate that it was they who furnished him with the vital introduction to Sir Charles Nicholson, Speaker of the Legislative Council. Nicholson had had a long association with Melbourne and had been elected Port Phillip representative in the New South Wales Legislative Council back in 1843. More recently in 1851, he would have had dealings with La Trobe who spent two months in Sydney, preparing for the official separation of the Port Phillip District from New South Wales

and its establishment as the independent colony of Victoria.<sup>17</sup>

Nicholson and Howitt also had significant connections, reaching back to the renowned medical school of Edinburgh University from which they graduated within three years of one another. The highly cultivated, civilised Nicholson who had much in common with both La Trobe and Howitt, was clearly well disposed to promote the cause of their friend, Thomas Woolner. In January, 1854, Woolner wrote to his father from Sydney that he was there chiefly to try to win the commission for a statue of Wentworth for which the public had been subscribing. In this revealing letter, he remarked: 'If this Wentworth statue were in Melbourne, instead of Sydney I could make

Sir Charles Fitzroy. In fact, almost all of Woolner's subjects of 1854 were drawn from the nominated members of the New South Wales Legislature, the small, powerful group at the heart of Sydney's establishment, in the process of moving the colony towards self-government and independence from England.<sup>19</sup>

The contrast between Woolner's portraits of La Trobe and Fitzroy is telling. They reveal how effectively he was able to suggest character even in such a seemingly limited format as the profile medallion: with firmly set mouth and directed gaze, Fitzroy looks every inch the military commander; even his crisp, curling hair evokes something of the shrewd, energetic operator that he was. Of moderate views and willing to compromise, he was tactful with



**George Ward Cole, Thomas Anne Cole and Farquhar Cole, 1853**  
Thomas Woolner, 1825-1892  
Plaster relief medallions  
Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria, LTS 23 H26352

**Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 1828-1892**  
**Thomas Woolner, 1852**  
Pencil on paper  
National Portrait Gallery, London,  
NPG 3848

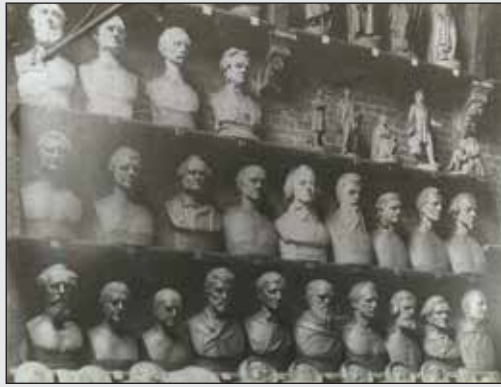
almost certain of it; but here I have no friends particularly interested in my success. Of course I could not expect to find such friends as the Howitts. I might wait a long time for that'. He added rather petulantly: 'Sir Charles Nicholson, Speaker of the Legislative Council, is remarkably civil to me in introducing me about and inviting me to his house, etc., etc., but what good is all this to me, unless I obtain work thro' it?'.<sup>18</sup>

The prestige of having Victoria's Lieutenant-Governor among his sitters was noted in the Sydney press and despite his grizzles, Woolner had again landed on his feet. The distinguished Nicholson also happened to be the colony's most noted connoisseur and his introductions were as effective in Sydney as La Trobe's and the Howitts' had been in Melbourne. However, while Woolner's Melbourne portraits had been confined to their circle of personal friends, in Sydney Nicholson presented him to his fellow Legislative Council members, including the Governor-General,

unruly colonists while refusing with aristocratic assurance, to be bullied by the British Colonial Office. By contrast, La Trobe, a gentleman but with no such powerful connections, is presented as a man of sensibility and introspection. It is not difficult to imagine from his reflective expression, that this was the man whose steadfast vision for an educated, civilised community was a determinant factor in shaping Melbourne, the cultural capital of this country.<sup>20</sup>

During his six months in Sydney in 1854, the pushy, ambitious Woolner was always ready to grasp at any opportunity. Invited everywhere by his famous Sydney sitters, he declared this to be one of the happiest periods of his life. His portrait of Wentworth was even more popular than La Trobe's. Famed for crossing the Blue Mountains with Blaxland and Lawson, he was a leading statesman and political player, a large landholder and a co-founder of the *Australian* newspaper. The popular hero was delighted with his portrait medallion, much praised in press





Photographer unknown  
**Interior of the studio of Thomas Woolner**  
 Reproduced by kind permission of Benedict Read

**Thomas Woolner,  
 1825-1892**  
**Monument to  
 Captain James  
 Cook, 1878**  
 Cast bronze  
 Hyde Park, Sydney,  
 New South Wales



reviews which also named Woolner as the likely choice for Wentworth's public statue. Woolner was naturally keen to win the commission and the £2,000 artist fee but to his vexation and disappointment, it was decided to have the competition judged in London.<sup>21</sup>

In pursuit of this prize, Woolner returned to England via Melbourne from where he sailed on 22 July 1854, two and a half months after La Trobe had finally left Victoria. During the three month voyage, Woolner's worst moment occurred when he thought he had lost the case containing the plaster models of his colonial sitters, his 'seeding capital' as he significantly called them. He was counting on the income from commissions for bronze casts of these plasters to set himself up in London. Fortunately, they re-appeared, and a later view of his studio crammed with sculpted portraits of many of the 'great and good' of later Victorian Britain, shows how successful he was to become. Among the medallions along the front row shelf, some of the Australian plaster models can be made out, including one of Wentworth.<sup>22</sup>

In London, Woolner went on to achieve the longed-for fame and fortune that might have persuaded Edith Howitt's family to consent officially to their marriage. However, a couple of years after he left Melbourne, Godfrey Howitt's wife, Phoebe, was afflicted by what must have been a severe stroke, causing Edith to break off the engagement with Woolner and take her mother's place running the family household.

Despite this break with the Howitts, Woolner's connection with Australia continued to be a long one. The initial Wentworth sculpture commission was withdrawn but in addition to medallions, Woolner went on to execute many other portrait busts of prominent Australians including one of Wentworth. Among these was Edward Wilson, the owner and editor of the Melbourne *Argus* and Justice Sir Redmond Barry who, with La Trobe's full collaboration, was instrumental in founding the cultural institutions of Victoria. However, after many tribulations, the culmination of Woolner's Australian career and the fulfilment of his earliest ideals and ambitions was his huge, free-standing *Monument to Captain Cook* of 1879. To this day, Cook overlooks Sydney's Hyde Park; his commanding gesture embraces all those who arrive on these sunny shores, so cherished in Woolner's memory. There can be no doubt that the triumphant emergence of Thomas Woolner, PRB, the most prominent sculptor of his age, was launched right here in Melbourne. Full credit for this must be given to the influence and support of its first Lieutenant-Governor, Charles Joseph La Trobe.<sup>23</sup>

1 Benedict Read, *Victorian Sculpture*, New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1982, p.3.

2 W. Holman Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, vol. 1, London: The Macmillan Company, 1905, pp.112-113; Tim Barringer, 'The Last of England', in Patricia Tryon Macdonald, *Exiles and Emigrants: epic journeys to Australia in the Victorian era*, Melbourne: Council of Trustees of the National Gallery of Victoria, 2005, pp.18-25.

3 Sir Joshua Reynolds, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pre-Raphaelite\\_Brotherhood](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pre-Raphaelite_Brotherhood) (accessed 1 September 2014)

4 Tim Barringer, *Reading the Pre-Raphaelites*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, rev. ed., 2012, pp.9ff, 34-8.

- 5 Martin Greenwood, 'Little Red Riding Hood' in Benedict Read and Joanna Barnes (eds), *Pre-Raphaelite Sculpture: Nature and Imagination in British Sculpture 1848-1914*, London: The Henry Moore Foundation in association with Lund Humphries, 1991, pp.142-3; McCrae produced Agnes La Trobe's portrait in 1844 and sketches of the three younger children in 1850, MS 13354, Box 3, Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria (henceforth A. MSS Coll., SLV); Margaret Bowman, *Cultured Colonists: George Alexander Gilbert and his family, settlers in Port Phillip*, Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing and State Library of Victoria, 2014, pp.27-8.
- 6 Martin Greenwood, 'Puck', in Read and Barnes, pp. 141-2; Read, 1982, p. 27; Read, 'Thomas Woolner: PRB, RA' in Read and Barnes, pp. 21-2; Read, 1982, p.199.
- 7 Amy Woolner (ed.), *Thomas Woolner R.A., Sculptor and Poet: his life in letters*, London: Chapman and Hall, 1917, p.18.
- 8 *Ibid.*, pp.40-44, 61.
- 9 *Ibid.*, p.60.
- 10 Read quoted in Leonée Ormond, 'Thomas Woolner and the Image of Tennyson', in Read and Barnes, p.42, n.13; Caroline Clemente, 'Thomas Woolner's Portrait Medallion of C. J. La Trobe' in *The La Trobe Journal*, no. 80, Spring 2007, pp.57-9.
- 11 Read, 1982, p.27.
- 12 Woolner, p. 61; *Melbourne Morning Herald*, 13 July, 1853; Clemente, 'The Private Face of Patronage: the Howitts, artistic and intellectual philanthropists in early Melbourne society', MA thesis, University of Melbourne, 2005, pp.37, 49; Correspondence, letter to Edith Howitt from her mother Phoebe Howitt., 1 July, 1855, MS13848, Box 4, Folder 1, Howitt Family Papers, A. MSS Coll., SLV.
- 13 *The Argus*, 26 December, 1855, p.3.
- 14 Thomas Woolner, *Captain George Ward Cole, Thomas Anne Cole and their son Farquhar Cole*, 1853, plaster relief medallions (20.8 cm, 20.8 cm, 18.0 cm diameters), LTS 23 H 23652, La Trobe Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria (henceforth Pictures Coll., SLV); Georgiana McCrae, *Thomas Anne McCrae*, 1832, watercolour and pencil (15.5 x 11.5 cm), 2009.554, National Gallery of Victoria (henceforth NGV).
- 15 Thomas Woolner, *Miss Edith Howitt*, 1853, bronze relief medallion, 21.8 cm diameter, NGA 80.77, National Gallery of Australia; Georgiana McCrae, *Edith Mary Howitt*, c.1853, watercolour and pencil, 23.8 x 18.6 cm (oval, sight), private collection, Melbourne; Georgiana McCrae, *Edith Mary Howitt*, c.1854, pencil, 17.5 x 15.0 cm, P113-1989, NGV.; Unknown photographer, *Edith Mary Howitt*, 1853/1855, albumen silver carte-de-visite, 8.9 x 5.3 cm, Howitt family collection, H93.371/6, Pictures Coll., SLV; A. Woolner, p.18; Thomas Woolner, *Edith Mary Howitt*, 1853, ivory relief medallion, 7.7 cm diameter, private collection, Melbourne.
- 16 Thomas Woolner, *John Pinney Bear and Annette Bear*, 1853, plaster relief medallions. 30.5 cm diameter (framed), respectively 924S3/924S3, Art Gallery of South Australia; *The Reverend James Clow*, 1853, plaster relief medallion, 31.5 cm (framed), H36 LTS 17, Pictures Coll., SLV; Unidentified male portrait, bronze relief medallion, 1853, 42 cm maximum diameter (framed) , XP\*8, Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales (henceforth, ML SLNSW); Georgiana McCrae, *Octavius Browne*, 1841, watercolour and pencil, 24.8 x 19.5 cm, LT 1060, Picture Coll., SLV.
- 17 Brenda Niall, *Georgiana: a biography of Georgiana McCrae, painter, diarist, pioneer*, Carlton, Victoria: Miegunyah Press at the Melbourne University Press, 1994, pp.140-1, 152-3; Dianne Reilly Drury, *La Trobe: the making of a governor*, Carlton, Victoria: Melbourne University Publishing, 2006, p.214.
- 18 David S. Macmillan, 'Nicholson, Sir Charles', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press (henceforth *ADB*), 1967, vol.2, pp.283-5; A. Woolner, pp.64-5.
- 19 John M. Ward, 'Fitzroy, Sir Charles Augustus', *ADB*, 1966, vol.1, pp.384-89.
- 20 Thomas Woolner, *Charles Joseph La Trobe*, 1853, bronze relief medallion, 21.1 cm diameter, H29576 PCV LTS 19, Pictures Coll., SLV; Thomas Woolner, *Sir Charles Fitzroy*, 1854, bronze relief medallion, 21.0 cm diameter, P\*39, ML SLNSW.
- 21 A. Woolner, p.104; Michael Perse, 'Wentworth, William Charles', *ADB*, 1967, vol.2, pp.582-89; Thomas Woolner, *William Charles Wentworth*, 1854, bronze relief medallion, 21.5 cm diameter, H1470 NE BAY 3/D, Pictures Coll., SLV; A. Woolner, pp.72-3.
- 22 Diary of Thomas Woolner in Australia, 1852-1854, 9 August, 11 October, 1854, Australian Joint Copying Project M Series, A. MSS Coll. 1926, Microfilm, SLV; Read in Read and Barnes, pp.23-4; Read, 1982, p.54, plate 52.
- 23 Juliet Peers, 'Beyond Captain Cook: Thomas Woolner and Australia', in Read and Barnes, p.34f.

# Superintendent La Trobe and the Catarina, Australia's Worst Shipwreck

By Dr Andrew Lemon and Marjorie Morgan

Andrew Lemon, former President of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria, has published widely in Australian biography and history as an independent historian. He wrote the epic three-volume *History of Australian Thoroughbred Racing*. He was awarded a Doctor of Letters from the University of Melbourne.

Marjorie Morgan, OAM (for services to the Victorian School for Deaf Children, and to community history) is a former Councillor of the City of Box Hill. She has a distinguished record as author, genealogist, lecturer and historical researcher.

Andrew and Marjorie collaborated to write *Poor Souls, They Perished: the Catarina, Australia's worst shipwreck*. First published in 1986, it won the Fellowship of Australian Writers' Wilke Award for Australian-published non-fiction. A third revised edition has been published in 2014. Andrew and Marjorie also wrote *Buried by the Sea*, a history of Williamstown Cemetery.

This paper was given on the occasion of the 2014 AGL Shaw Lecture to a joint meeting of the C J La Trobe Society and the Royal Historical Society of Victoria on Tuesday 17 June 2014.

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## Part 1, by Marjorie Morgan

In the early 1840s there was a great demand for labour in the Port Phillip District, now known as Victoria, as pastoralists expanding their flocks and herds into new territories required more workers. At the same time the number of unemployed and very poor people in the British Isles who were a charge on governments, counties and church parishes was increasing.

Free migration from the British Isles had been established in the 1830s under two systems, both financed by the sale of Crown land in Australia. Under the direct government system commencing in 1832, close on 50,000 assisted immigrants arrived in the Australian colonies over the following ten years, with many after 1835 settling in Port Phillip District. The

year 1845 was particularly busy as 4,335 people arrived from overseas, helping to increase Port Phillip's population from 10,291 residents in 1840 to just over 31,000 in the space of five years.

There was a boom and bust cycle. When the economy slumped and revenue from land sales declined, assisted immigration was discontinued. Squatters still in need of labour then began pleading for immigration to resume. This pressure brought results and a new private scheme was devised under the watchful eye of the Agent General for Emigration in England. This was a private or 'bounty scheme' with the Agent General having some responsibility for the supervision of the vessels, the voyage, victualling of the ships and the selection of a surgeon to accompany each vessel. Those who were eligible to become bounty migrants had to be subject to government regulations.

In practice this meant that British shipowners and entrepreneurs bought the right to send out to the colony a quota of emigrants as arranged with the British government. Provided the immigrants met certain rigid criteria on arrival in Australia, the colonial government would order the payment of bounties to the shipowners after the ship reached the colony.

The colonists knew exactly what they required: single men and women first of all, then young married couples preferably without children. They were all required to be of good character and of such background as to accept hard, chiefly unskilled work, often in remote locations. The colonists basically needed general labourers, shepherds and female domestics but were not averse to accepting those with special skills – blacksmiths, wheelwrights, sawyers and the like.

carrier. In early 1845 William Forsyth Smith of Liverpool, sailmaker and a principal of the shipping firm William Smith and Son, purchased the *Cataraqui* to send an authorised quota of migrants to Port Phillip. Important preliminaries needed attention. The *Cataraqui* had only a single deck and there was a depth of 22 feet below (6.7 metres) for cargo. A second internal deck had to be fitted and other repairs made. Provisions had to be taken on board as well as fresh water, sufficient for three quarts (3.4 litres) per adult per day, as recommended by the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners.

The *Cataraqui* was a wooden ship sheathed with copper and rigged as a three-masted barque. By the standards of the day, she was of moderate size with a length of 138 feet (42 metres), 30 feet (9 metres) in breadth, and in capacity 802 tons. (The main cabin of a current-day Airbus



**Bill Morgan,  
photographer**  
**View of Kiddington 1980**  
Thirteen families came  
from adjacent towns in  
Oxfordshire, including  
three from Kiddington

The British government insisted upon a balance of the sexes amongst the emigrants or a preponderance of females. It further insisted that each unmarried woman be under the protection of a married couple on the same ship, who might be parents, relatives or respectable friends well known to the young woman's family.

In these days of sail, and before the opening of the Suez Canal, communication between Australia and England was protracted. There was a time lag between when economic conditions in New South Wales deteriorated in 1844 and when the British government agreed to halt the dispatch of emigrants from Britain. As explained in our book *Poor Souls, They Perished*, it was not possible to turn off the tap instantly.<sup>1</sup> The last bounty ship to set sail for Australia at that time was the *Cataraqui* in April 1845.

Soon after being built and fitted out in the Port of Quebec in 1840, the *Cataraqui* had sailed on her maiden voyage to Liverpool, a port that was to loom large in her destiny. Her voyages over the next four years are imperfectly known, but it seems that she was used exclusively as a cargo

A380, by comparison, is only slightly longer and narrower by 2.5 metres.) The ship's only ornate feature was the figurehead of a woman, fixed beneath the bowsprit. The original owners had taken the name from a river and township 500 kilometres upstream from Quebec where Ontario, the last of the Five Great Lakes, begins to drain down the St Lawrence on its long passage to the sea. *Cataraqui* was the French spelling of the name given to the area originally occupied by the Iroquois.

Having recently returned from his second voyage to Australia as a Surgeon-Superintendent on migrant ships, Dr Charles Chichester Carpenter was chosen for the same position on the *Cataraqui*. His assistant was his younger brother Edward who intended following Charles into the medical profession. To the post of ship's master, the Smith firm appointed Captain Christopher William Finlay, a thirty-six-year-old who came highly recommended as a well-educated, steady and experienced man who had learned his craft on the far oceans of the world. Thomas Guthery, sometimes recorded as Guthrie, who was engaged as second in command was fully

qualified for the duties. Others vouched for him unhesitatingly and noted some previous command posts. He was thirty years old and came from Northumberland.

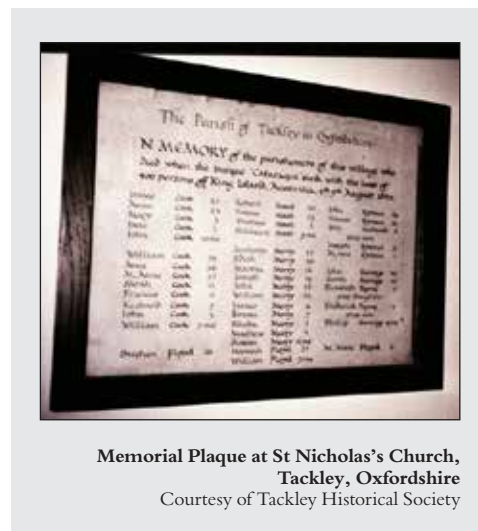
Including the captain, officers, surgeon and assistant, the full complement of crew numbered forty-three. Few were aboard to administer to the comforts of the passengers except a twenty-four-year-old Jamaican as the 'emigrants' cook'. The oldest man on the payroll was the first cook, Andrew Lee aged sixty-two, also Jamaican-born. Most crewmen were able or ordinary seamen but several apprentices between the ages of thirteen and sixteen were engaged for the voyage, having signed on with William Smith and Sons for four or five years. Most of the seamen themselves had gone to sea as young boys so even the sailors in their twenties were veterans.

William Smith and Sons were very active in securing passengers for the *Cataraqui*. As early as January 1845 the Tackley parish vestry in Oxfordshire placed an advertisement in the weekly newspaper, *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, on behalf of William Smith and Sons regarding 'free passages to Port Philip' [sic]. April was the month when the ship was intended to sail so it was important that the owners made early preparations. William Smith's agents made direct contact with parish churches in three counties in particular, Oxfordshire, Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire. Under British Poor Law legislation, parishes administered 'outdoor' unemployment relief and the dreaded workhouses for the destitute. Of the 367 emigrants on the *Cataraqui* from England and Ireland, at least 102 were aided under the provisions of the *Poor Law Amendment Act*.

Research for our book uncovered the fact that quite a number of the families were related, with more from a scattering of places throughout England and Ireland. The minute books of the Bedford Poor Law Union tell us that the Board of Guardians was alert to any chance of availing itself of these occasional opportunities to remove welfare recipients from their books. Kin and accidents of geography played as large a role in prompting individuals to emigrate on the *Cataraqui* as did misery alone.

One man, Solomon Brown, a labourer from Bedfordshire, was destined to be chosen as a passenger on the *Cataraqui*. Details about his background that can be gleaned from the Sutton Parish Church records show that he was in many ways typical of his fellow passengers. In his late twenties Solomon was married in the parish church on Christmas Day 1842 to the widow Hannah Smith. Neither could write their names

in the register. Solomon was ten years younger than Hannah, who had three daughters from her previous marriage: Ellen aged eleven, Phoebe eight, and Elizabeth five. Solomon and Hannah also had a nine-month-old daughter, Ruth.



Memorial Plaque at St Nicholas's Church, Tackley, Oxfordshire  
Courtesy of Tackley Historical Society

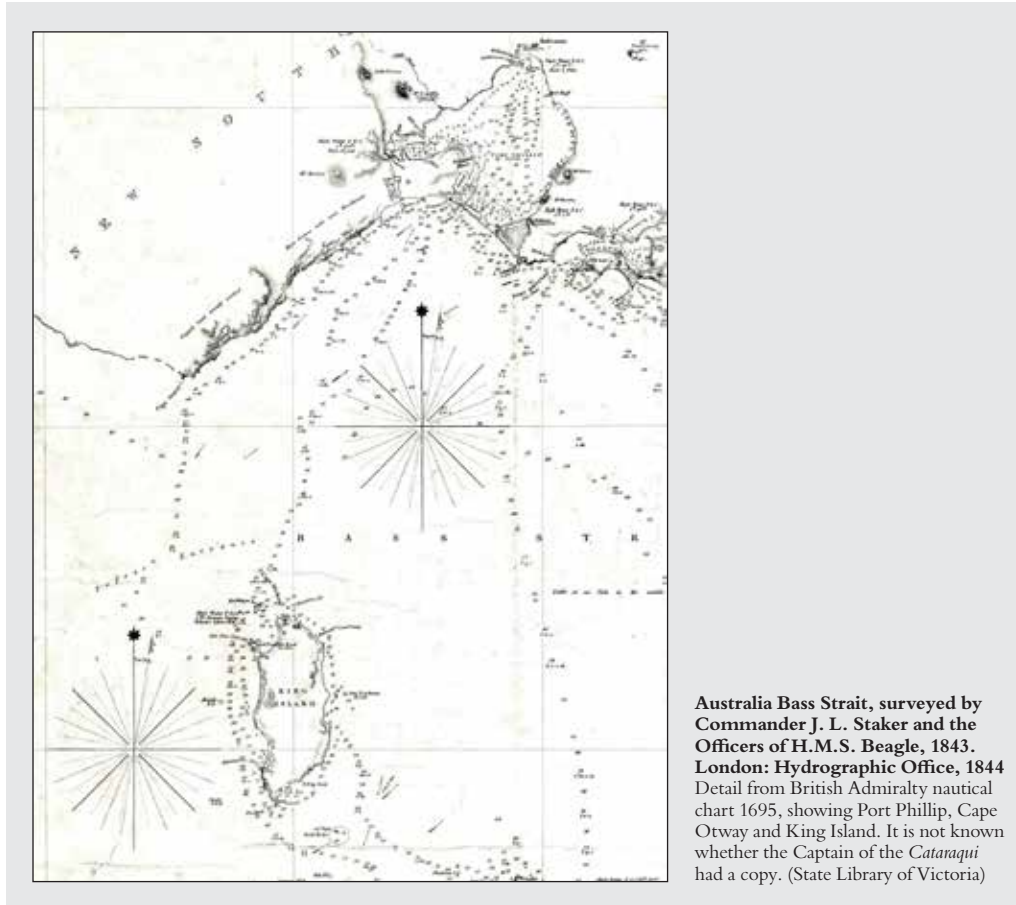
Using the counties of Bedford and Cambridge as examples we found that beneath the surface ran many unexpected common currents. Altogether, thirteen families, consisting of ninety-six individuals – more than one-quarter of the total number of passengers to sail on the *Cataraqui* – came from these two counties. Another contingent of similar size came from Oxfordshire, seventeen families and four single adults, making ninety-eight in all. Interconnection can be demonstrated or reasonably conjectured among almost all of them. To begin with, all but one came from towns within a twelve kilometer radius, while forty-two came from the village of Tackley. The Tackley emigrants constituted the largest group on the *Cataraqui* from any one village.

As many as 123 people came across from the north and south of Ireland to Liverpool in preparation for the voyage. They have few obvious interconnections, as distinct from those from the English counties. For instance, nearly all the unmarried adults (except those travelling with their families) came from Ireland. They numbered about forty-one people, or one third of all the Irish.

Boarding with their meagre belongings, the emigrants encountered the living quarters for the 22,000 kilometre journey that was expected to last, at best, three months. Arranged around the edge of each deck were the 'bed places' which were four feet by six feet (1.2 metres by 1.8) for two couples. Young children slept several per bed. Tables and forms were placed down the centre of the area. Single males and

single females were segregated at each end of the ship where their bed places were fifteen inches by six feet (0.4 metres by 1.8). Sixty-one families prepared to embark on the *Cataraqui*, some with as many as ten children, others newly married. Nearly half of the passengers were fourteen years or under and, of these, twenty-two were babies under one year. There were about fifty single men and women.

Mersey to head for the ocean and Australia. The early part of the voyage took the *Cataraqui* down the western side of Africa, with the months of May and much of June passing without incident. Before preparing to cross the Indian Ocean the ship called into Cape Town as it was the last port of call for ships to restock provisions. There are only two small islands between Cape Town and Australia.



**Australia Bass Strait, surveyed by Commander J. L. Staker and the Officers of H.M.S. Beagle, 1843. London: Hydrographic Office, 1844**  
Detail from British Admiralty nautical chart 1695, showing Port Phillip, Cape Otway and King Island. It is not known whether the Captain of the *Cataraqui* had a copy. (State Library of Victoria)

As preparations for the voyage drew to a conclusion, the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners finalised their Fifth Annual Report to Parliament, dating their document 20 March 1845. It reported that at 'Port Phillip, the prospect for single men is described as good, although the immigration of married people with young children was considered very inadvisable.' Not mentioned was that the great majority of passengers on the last of the bounty ships that they had authorised to sail to Port Phillip were married people with young children. The Commissioners were pleased with their efforts in helping many parishes to relieve themselves of their surplus population.

The *Cataraqui* finally set sail from the Port of Liverpool on Sunday 20 April 1845. The wind was blowing from the east as the ship left her moorings in the crowded docks on the River

It was now that things started to go wrong. On 4 July Robert Harvey, a Cornish-born seaman aged twenty-two, was lost overboard. Fifteen days after his death the *Cataraqui* was making good progress at about forty miles south of the island of St Paul, nearly the half-way point of the Indian Ocean crossing. Dr Charles Carpenter and brother Edward must have taken exceptional care of the health of the passengers as the only deaths on the journey so far were of babies who were always vulnerable. Jane, youngest of four daughters of Anne and Thomas Allens, was only three weeks old when she embarked with her family. Perhaps she was one of the six babies to die on board before the wreck. Five more babies were born during the voyage, no doubt with little privacy for the mothers.

The intricacies of navigation would have meant little to the passengers enduring the

drawn-out discomforts of close quarters and monotonous food, and now entering the fourth month of their voyage. At the time of passing east of St Paul, the seas became heavier as the weather turned boisterous. The winds, soon blowing at gale force, fluctuated from the north-west to the south-west, but the rain was incessant.

Inevitably the hatchways or entrance ways from the passenger deck to the upper deck had to

strength, Captain Finlay found it necessary to take in nearly all the canvas. The ship ran with the storm under close-reefed topsails and reefed foresail. Finally soon after nightfall on Sunday 3 August, the captain ordered the *Cataraqui* to be 'hove to'. For a ship this is the closest thing to putting on the brakes. The captain believed that the *Cataraqui* was standing only a few miles south of the Australian mainland at about the longitude of Portland, heading directly towards



**Philip J. Gray, artist**  
**Wreck of the *Cataraqui* – first rays of dawn, 2011**  
Gouache on Saunders Waterford watercolour paper  
Featured on the cover of *Poor Souls They Perished*, new edition 2014

be battened down against the weather. On finer days earlier in the voyage the captain would have allowed the passengers brief periods on deck. Now this would have been impossible. Over the next two weeks the miserable conditions took their toll, though perhaps not as grimly as Dr Carpenter may have feared.

Running before the gale, the ship made fast progress but it became impossible for the captain to determine the exact position of the *Cataraqui*. Measurements of latitude depended entirely on readings from the sun or, by night, the stars. Measurements of longitude were even more complicated, made using the ship's chronometer but their exactness also depended on determining the position of the sun. Prolonged storm conditions made this almost impossible. On the last day of July the weather briefly allowed what was described as one 'indifferent observation' encouraging the captain to believe that he was well on course to Bass Strait. The next day the weather became even worse. The ship was sailing towards one of Bass Strait's foul winter tempests.

On the first day of August, with the wind from the north-west increasing to hurricane

Cape Otway, the southernmost point before Port Phillip Bay. He would not want to reach that landfall on such a night.

Contrary to the captain's impression, the ship was instead standing as much as one hundred nautical miles further south and perilously close to the low, western coast of King Island. At three in the morning the gale seemed to moderate. In the darkness of the night and within, as he supposed, a day's sailing of Port Phillip, Captain Finlay gave the order to proceed.

Of the events that followed the only direct eye-witness account was written by Thomas Guthery, the Chief Mate. He was not a literary man but no other narrative of this story has quite the impact of his own words. This is the central point of our book *Poor Souls, They Perished*, which means it is far from the end of the story.

### **Part 2, by Andrew Lemon**

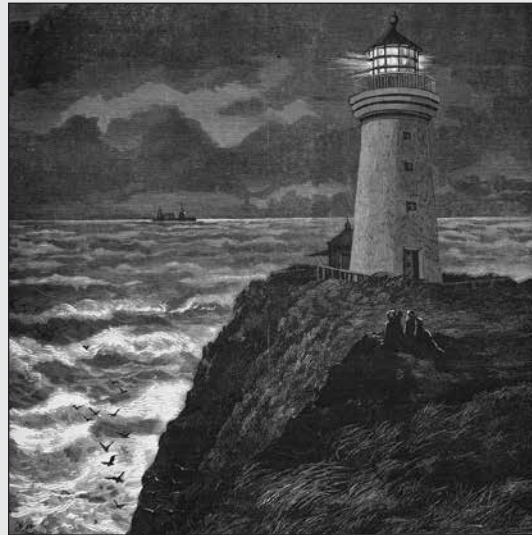
**M**arjorie Morgan has given an idea of the complexity of the story leading up to the wreck of the *Cataraqui*. It was her doggedness in the days before the proliferation of online family history sources that

made it possible to put real names and people back into what had become a very garbled story of the *Cataraqui*.

Unlike most shipwreck books, ours was less about the voyage and the terrible details of the wreck itself, and more about the world in which these events happened. The first chapter, 'The Terror of Sailors on these Coasts', talks about the first navigators, the discovery and

account of the immediate aftermath, of how the handful of survivors were rescued and brought back, several weeks later, to Melbourne.

'Tidings of Mourning and Lamentation and Woe' has the ring of a good sermon: this chapter talks about how the news of the wreck was received first in Melbourne. 'Across the Seas to England' follows the news back from Melbourne to reach London, Dublin and the



**James Waltham Curtis, 1839-1901, engraver**  
**Sketches on the Coast – Cape Otway**

Wood engraving

Published in supplement to Illustrated Australian News, November 8, 1884  
Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria, IAN08/11/84/177

slow process of mapping the Bass Strait islands. It poses the question of whether the captain of the *Cataraqui* had the benefit of the first detailed Admiralty charts of the Strait, the result of the famous hydrographic survey by the *Beagle*.

The second chapter follows the unlikely set of events that led to the *Cataraqui* setting sail with all its emigrants in the first place. Time and again, circumstances suggested it should not have departed, but it did. The third chapter 'Persons Willing to Emigrate' pulls together all the strands of Marjorie's family history research and discusses this in the context of England's poor laws and systems of assisted emigration. Then we look at 'An Eligible Ship for the Service', the story of the ship itself and its Canadian origins.

In 'God Grant Some One May be Saved' we provide the most authentic eye-witness and contemporary reports of the wreck. 'Haunted All the Days of Their Lives' takes us into the ways in which second-hand accounts of this disaster, and even first-hand – as with so many major events – can be spun, lied about, misunderstood. Through that maze we try to give an accurate

account of the immediate aftermath, of how the handful of survivors were rescued and brought back, several weeks later, to Melbourne. 'Tidings of Mourning and Lamentation and Woe' has the ring of a good sermon: this chapter talks about how the news of the wreck was received first in Melbourne. 'Across the Seas to England' follows the news back from Melbourne to reach London, Dublin and the

When re-indexing the new edition of *Poor Souls, They Perished: the Cataraqui, Australia's worst shipwreck*, I was struck by the fact that the two individuals who had the most entries in the book were New South Wales Governor, Sir George Gipps, and Charles Joseph La Trobe, Superintendent of the Port Phillip District.

Gipps had been concerned about the high risk of shipwrecks for years, but action was slow. Receding in public memory was the previous worst wreck, the convict ship *Neva* on King Island in 1835 on a journey to Botany Bay. Gipps found that maritime experts disagreed vigorously as to whether lighthouses should best be installed at the north or the south end of King Island, or just on the mainland at Cape Otway. A decade later the matter was still in the hearing



rooms of Legislative Council committees in Sydney when the *Cataraqui* was on the seas.

Charles Joseph La Trobe as Superintendent of the distant Port Phillip District was answerable to Gipps. His powers of decision were severely restricted on such matters as lighthouses. Nevertheless he becomes an important figure in the story of the wreck of the *Cataraqui* and its aftermath. The first mention of La Trobe in our book is when he expresses concern that the ship – known to be on its way to Melbourne – is a month overdue. He instructs the local Immigration Agent, Dr Patterson, to be prepared to process the paperwork at a moment's notice. The days of waiting grew into weeks.

wallaby, seals and birds) and two Aboriginal women who were kept as subsistence servants. This party was led by an irrepressible ex-convict, David Howie from Van Diemen's Land, whose extraordinary life has been told in a book by one of his descendants, Pauline Buckby.<sup>2</sup> Howie and his offsider, known only by his surname of Oakley, received the credit and the rewards for nurturing the survivors and keeping them alive. Six weeks elapsed before they were rescued by two men sailing a tiny whaleboat, the *Midge*, from Melbourne. It was Saturday 13 September before the *Midge*, Howie and Oakley and the nine survivors reached Melbourne and the tale could be told.



**Victorian Railways, photographer**  
**Lighthouse Cape Otway 1946**  
Pictures Collection, State Library of  
Victoria, H91.330/272  
Negative, glass

Unbeknown to anyone on the mainland, the ship had come to grief on remote King Island in the early hours of 4 August 1845. Stranded on a jagged reef within sight of the shore, the vessel took nearly two days to break apart as the storm raged. Although the crew made heroic efforts to bring the passengers from below decks and then to secure them to the vessel, it was a ghastly and hopeless case. By 6 August every one of the passengers – women, men, children – was dead from drowning or exposure, excepting only Solomon Brown, the emigrant from Bedford. By miraculous good fortune he was swept past the rocks to the shore. So too were eight of the crew. The rest perished, including Captain Finlay, Dr Carpenter and his brother. By careful calculation we can say that only nine of 409 on board survived the wreck of the *Cataraqui*. Some 170 years later, with 400 dead, it remains not only Australia's worst peacetime shipwreck but also our worst civil disaster.

The ordeal of the survivors washed ashore was far from over. They survived by luck. The big island was uninhabited except for a small party of traders and associated hunters (of

Newspapers, firstly the *Herald* and the *Courier*, produced what one hastily misprinted as an 'Extroradinary' Edition. The *Patriot* and the *Gazette* followed on Monday. La Trobe immediately sent a letter to Sydney by overland mail and followed up with an interview with the most senior of the survivors, Thomas Guthery. He sent a full report two days later. There was a further list with details and numbers on Friday 19 September. He instructed Dr Patterson to prepare an official list of deaths and survivors to be published in the *Government Gazette*. All the published lists, and the version in Dr Patterson's bounty registers, are highly inaccurate. First they were copied from water-damaged documents salvaged from the wreck. These already contained errors of spelling in names and places of origin. Each subsequent list had further transcription errors until many were unrecognisable. It was a major purpose of our book to recover for the victims their true identities.

On the following Sunday the Rev. Adam Thomson preached a sermon at St James's Church, Melbourne on the workings of Providence. La Trobe was likely to have been

present. The Superintendent displayed a masterful capacity to deal with the inevitable sequence of public responses to a major disaster, whether natural or man-made. La Trobe's important role in the aftermath of the *Cataraqui* disaster can be seen in several respects. First was his efficiency at the local level. He collected

run for port on the fatal night); others blamed the ship's construction or had dark conspiracy theories about companies and insurance.

La Trobe helped manage the intense grief expressed in the small settlement. His next step was to deal expeditiously with the need to collect



Peter Lemon, photographer  
Rocky shore on King Island where the *Cataraqui* was wrecked

information and issued prompt reports to his superiors. He sympathetically dealt with public reaction including demands for action. He coordinated practical support for the survivors and the rescuers.

The initial response to disaster, after shock, is often sympathy and generosity. Within days a public meeting was called at the Royal Mail Hotel. The Mayor of Melbourne supported it. The Rev. Mr Thomson took the chair. Funds were pledged – but for whom? The rescuers were at the top of the list, and then Solomon Brown, but there were arguments as to how much practical support was due to sailors who – it was said – had survived with their livelihood intact and with few further needs beyond new clothes. Theatrical entrepreneur George Coppin, larger than life, offered charity performances at his Theatre Royal. La Trobe who was disinclined to support theatricals declined to attend but applauded the initiative.

Then, almost immediately, there were searches for scapegoats: 'That great blame must be attributed to some quarter is evident,' said the *Port Phillip Gazette* without quite knowing to whom; while letters from old sailors diagnosed 'want of skill or want of due care'. Editorials denounced the lack of action on lighthouses. Some blamed the captain (which later led to rumours, never substantiated to our knowledge, that the surgeon was pressing the captain to

and bury the bodies, even though King Island was remote and not even part of his territory. Our book explains how, with some misgivings and after discussions with his Harbour Master, he commissioned David Howie to return to King Island to undertake 'the decent interment of such remains of the unfortunate sufferers as may be recoverable'.

Howie had put himself forward for the job, writing that he well knew 'the care such an undertaking requires'. La Trobe's instructions were that Howie was, as soon as possible after his return to the island, to collect 'with the utmost diligence' all the remains that might be recoverable, and to 'inter them as far as practicable in one place'. Further, he should continue to bury 'any remains that may from time to time be cast up, or become uncovered on the coast as long as Mr Howie's party remain in the vicinity.' He was to keep 'some kind of record' of the number of bodies recovered. Once this was done and the work certified he would be paid the sum of £50. From the government store he was to be provided with any tools that he might need for the job. Howie selected three spades, one shovel, one pick axe and 'a grapnel iron'. By the end of 1845, the bodies of most of the victims of the *Cataraqui* had been safely buried in mass graves near the beach. By David Howie's account a surprisingly large number of bodies were recovered. His stay on King Island this time extended for more than two months.

All these arrangements were initiated before the news of the disaster had even reached Sydney. Governor Gipps received the first report from La Trobe on 16 September. He responded swiftly, giving La Trobe the necessary authority for the actions already taken. Gipps wrote to the Colonial Secretary in England, Lord

the sum payable to the shipowners would have already been paid when the ship left Liverpool. La Trobe's next involvement with the *Cataraqui* story, and the furthest-reaching, was his personal crusade to have a lighthouse built on the cliffs at Cape Otway at the earliest opportunity. While publicly urging restraint, the Superintendent's



**Bill Morgan, photographer**  
**Marjorie Morgan with companions at the 1950s memorial cairn, 1980**  
 The cairn replaced the timber and iron plaque installed on the orders of Superintendent La Trobe at the *Cataraqui* wreck site in 1848

Stanley, enclosing copies of all reports including La Trobe's letters and Guthery's account of the wreck. Advance rumours of the wreck (via ships passing in the night off Brazil) reached England on 2 February 1846 and were mentioned in the next day's shipping news in *The Times*. Official accounts were published on 4 February, and in Dublin on 9 February amid reports of the worsening Irish Famine.

La Trobe continued to follow up administratively. Thomas Guthery left Melbourne in late September and at La Trobe's urging presented himself to Governor Gipps. The Governor took a generous view, granting a gratuity from the Immigration Fund and helping Guthery get a berth on an outward vessel, *Eliza*. The first mate left Sydney on 5 November, taking with him the only authoritative knowledge of the facts of the wreck. The other sailors dispersed too. The surviving immigrant Solomon Brown found employment in the country. After the first edition of our book was published in 1986, we made contact with descendants, for Solomon remarried in Geelong a few years after the wreck. This family are the only known direct descendants of the hundreds of emigrants who sailed on the *Cataraqui*.<sup>3</sup>

In October 1845 La Trobe transmitted to Governor Gipps a copy of what under other circumstances would be called the Bounty List of the emigrant ship *Cataraqui*. He noted that, in accordance with the regulations, one half of

private letters to Gipps urged immediate action on lighthouses.

Dianne Reilly wrote on La Trobe's discovery of Cape Otway in *La Trobeana* in 2006,<sup>4</sup> and showed the Superintendent's tenacity in finding a practicable land route to Cape Otway and the proposed lighthouse site. In April 1846 La Trobe traversed the difficult territory to the cape and returned full of urgency for the project, for Cape Otway is a commanding eminence with an unimpeded view to the great ocean to the west. The need for a beacon on such exposed cliffs became clear to him. 'A rise, about a musket shot from the brink of the precipitous face of the southern point of the promontory furnishes, as it appears to me, an admirable site for the projected Light House.'<sup>5</sup>

Our book outlines the delays at the Sydney and London ends of negotiations. Arguments still raged as to whether lights were needed on King Island itself. But La Trobe was ready to swing into action in his own territory. By the end of August 1846 tenders had been advertised for the construction of the lighthouse at Cape Otway, and accepted for a second lighthouse at Gabo Island off Cape Howe. A third lighthouse for the Kent Group of Islands in eastern Bass Strait had been put into the hands of the Van Diemen's Land government.

The Cape Otway lighthouse first shone out to sea in August 1848, averting many further

calamities. Its quick construction at that early date quite clearly is attributable to the shock of the *Cataraqui* disaster. But it did not entirely solve the problem of King Island, as the less disastrous wrecks of the *Brahmin* and *Water Witch* in 1854 were to show. Not until 1861 was the first King Island lighthouse built, at Cape Wickham on the northern end.

Even this did not solve the problem. Three large ships came to grief on King Island's west coast in the next twenty years. The *Netherby* in 1866 had more emigrants on it than did the *Cataraqui*, but all were saved. The *British Admiral*, also from Liverpool, lost all but nine of its eighty-eight passengers and crew when in 1874 it struck the west coast several miles north of the *Cataraqui* beach and closer to the modern town of Currie. In 1879 – thirty-four years after the wreck of the *Cataraqui* – a modest steel lighthouse was built near the entrance to tiny Currie harbour. It was this light, in conjunction with those at Cape Wickham and Cape Otway, which finally gave a measure of real protection to shipping against the menace of King Island.

Assisted immigration to Port Phillip did not resume till 1847. We speculate that it may have been the imminent arrival of the first ship that reminded Superintendent Charles Joseph La Trobe that there was still no memorial on King Island to the wreck of the *Cataraqui*. Straight after the disaster La Trobe – as he said he would – had commissioned the construction of a monument in wood and iron from the Melbourne foundry of Langlands, Fulton and Co. An inscription detailed the main facts and concluded, 'This tablet is erected at the expense of the local Government of Port Phillip.'

The memorial languished in Melbourne for two years. The problem was that the Superintendent had official access to only one suitable vessel, the schooner *Apollo*, under the control of the Harbour Master. When in November 1846 La Trobe asked that it be used to take the memorial to King Island, he was given a curt refusal. So nothing happened until 1848. Word reached David Howie that the Superintendent was looking for ways to get the memorial to its proper resting place. In April Howie addressed a letter to La Trobe in

characteristic style. He wanted £50 for the work. Howie's information was good, but this time came too late. La Trobe had accepted a tender from Francis Pillman, for exactly £50 to convey the memorial to King Island and to fix it in position. Pillman was the contractor who was shipping stores to Cape Otway for construction of the lighthouse.

La Trobe's memorial to the victims and heroes of the *Cataraqui* gives us a further measure of the man. The spot where it was placed is remote even today, and few people ever got to see the original. But La Trobe knew it was important to mark reverently the place of Australia's worst civil disaster. Nearly a hundred years later it had corroded almost beyond recognition and was replaced by a stone cairn and metal plaque. Another forty years on, at the 150th anniversary of the wreck in 1995, the municipal council at King Island established an appropriate modern memorial after having identified the site of the main mass grave dug by David Howie.

The Cape Otway lighthouse on the mainland, still standing tall and proud, is also in its own way a memorial to La Trobe as well as to the poor souls who perished in the wreck of the *Cataraqui*.

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- 1 Andrew Lemon and Marjorie Morgan, *Poor Souls, They Perished: the Cataraqui, Australia's worst shipwreck*. 3rd edition, revised, Warrandyte, Victoria: Burgewood Books, 2014. This article reproduces some material from the book.
  - 2 Pauline Buckby, *David Howie, Devil or Saint?* Smithton, Tasmania: Jamala Press, 2003.
  - 3 Peter Armstrong and family, of Ballarat.
  - 4 Dianne Reilly, 'La Trobe's Discovery of Cape Otway', *La Trobeana*, vol 4, no 1, April 2006, pp.10-12.
  - 5 La Trobe to Colonial Secretary, 14 April 1846. Copy in Superintendent's Outward Letter Book, Public Record Office Victoria VPRS 46/326.
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# La Trobe Sites: a review

By Dr Fay Woodhouse

**Fay Woodhouse is a professional historian who has written histories for the university, public, community and private sectors. Her latest book (with Peter Yule) is *Pericleans, Plumbers and Practitioners: the First Fifty Years of the Monash Law School* published in 2014. She is a Fellow of the School of Historical and Philosophical Studies, University of Melbourne, was the Editor of *La Trobeana* from 2002 to 2008, and is currently a member of the Editorial Committee.**

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There are lots of things you may not know about La Trobe's legacy: the surprising rewards you will find while navigating 'Places and Plaques' on the La Trobe Society website, [www.latrobesociety.org.au/LaTrobe-sites.html](http://www.latrobesociety.org.au/LaTrobe-sites.html)

Many of us know the story of La Trobe's life, achievements, trials and tribulations during his fifteen years in Melbourne. However, like me, you may not know or understand the extent to which his name is honoured by place names and plaques and all sorts of interesting things throughout the state and in some overseas cities.

Starting with Melbourne and the suburb of Jolimont, three significant streets are named after family members: Agnes Street for La Trobe's eldest daughter who left Melbourne

as a small child to go to school in Switzerland; Charles Street for his only son; and Sophie Lane for his beloved wife. That's just the beginning.

Elsewhere in Jolimont, East Melbourne and the CBD, we have Jolimont Station, Jolimont Terrace and Jolimont Road. We all know La Trobe Street but may not be aware of Latrobe Avenue in Alphington which also has the Latrobe Golf Club (note the variant spelling). Some may live and vote in the southeastern La Trobe electorate. However, what makes this website so interesting is that most entries contain a link to 'Street View' and 'View Map' which means you can click on either of these links and see the street view which provides views of the local surroundings, the context to the street name. 'View Map' provides the Google map of the street, lane or avenue. It's all pretty exciting.



Latrobe Bushland Reserve,  
near Princeton



Swing Bridge over the  
La Trobe River, Sale

As you can see from this small example from inner Melbourne, there are plenty of places commemorating La Trobe. But there are so many places in country Victoria too. Take for example the Latrobe Bushland Reserve, La Trobe Creek, and Latrobe Road all located near Princetown in the Shire of Corangamite. If one looks further down the list you see that there is also Latrobe Parade Bushland Reserve in Dromana. In South Gippsland we have the Latrobe Bridge which is in fact the Sale Swing Bridge designed by John Grainger and completed in 1883. Agnes La Trobe is famous in that area too – she is represented by the township of Agnes, Agnes Falls and the Agnes River in South Gippsland. And going a little further afield we see that Tasmania has a town of Latrobe – and there’s a city of Latrobe in Pennsylvania, USA.

There are many known and unknown places in this list of sites and some may come

as a surprise. As we know, La Trobe travelled extensively during his time in Victoria. However, the website has more to offer. The second part, listed as ‘Plaques and other items’, is a surprising collection of objects. Take for example, the S-303 C J La Trobe Steam locomotive built in 1930 at the Newport Railway Workshops and converted to oil firing in 1951. In service for the Spirit of Progress passenger train, it operated from Melbourne to Albury until May 1954, after having completed 2.3 million kilometres. Then we see the racehorse, a black gelding sired by Simeon’s Fort that raced in the mid-1930s for thirty-five starts including the Melbourne Cup 1934, the Australian Cup 1935 and the Sydney Cup 1935. A ‘smart stayer’ owned by G.L. Scott, it initially trained as a trooper’s horse at the Bundoora police depot.

Not to be ignored is the ‘HMAS La Trobe’. This minesweeper/corvette was built



S-303 C J La Trobe, locomotive



HMAS La Trobe



La Trobe, racehorse

at Mort's Dock & Engineering in Sydney in 1942 for the Royal Australian Navy and named after the town of Latrobe in Tasmania. She served off Darwin, New Guinea and Borneo until 1945 and then became a training ship at the Flinders Naval Depot until 1952. She was sold for scrap in 1956.

The C J La Trobe Society website contains an amazing catalogue of places and things named after Charles Joseph La Trobe. Indeed, we have a fabulous catalogue of place names and plaques as well as a unique array of surprising articles. The arrangement on the website is clear and easy to navigate and makes a rewarding hour of entertaining exploration and education. In fact it is deceptively sleek and belies the huge amount of work undertaken to thoroughly research each item. The creators of this site, Helen Armstrong and John Botham, must be heartily congratulated. These new pages are a great asset

to the already splendid-looking and informative C J La Trobe Society website (which now also features illustrated Timeline pages and Sophie La Trobe's letters).

*If you find that some of the items lack photographs, when you are out and about in Victoria, why not take a photograph and send it to Helen and John at the email address: [info@latrobesociety.org.au](mailto:info@latrobesociety.org.au) – we know that they would appreciate receiving them. (Ed.)*



## La Trobe's Cottage Report

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The fifth season of Sunday afternoon openings for the general public at La Trobe's Cottage began in October and will run until the end of April 2015. The Sunday afternoon program over the last four years has been very successful, attracting many visitors from Melbourne and beyond, interstate and overseas. All of this has been possible with the generous support and time given by National Trust Volunteers and Friends of La Trobe's Cottage.

The National Trust engaged the services of photographer Barney Meyer to produce a 3D virtual tour of the Cottage. This focuses on the Cottage's interior and can be viewed on the Friends of La Trobe's Cottage website. Further interactive features will be added in due course, but meanwhile it provides splendid images of the Cottage, furnishings and its surrounds.

The Friends of La Trobe's Cottage are delighted that The Garden at La Trobe's Cottage won the Historical Interpretation Award at the Victorian Community History Awards for 2014. The citation reads: 'This is an intriguing historical project... This entry is unique as it will continue to develop as the garden grows, and further contribute to our appreciation of mid-nineteenth century colonial gardens and the landscape around the cottage in the period in which it was inhabited by the La Trobe family'.

This award would not have been possible without the dedicated work of so many Friends of La Trobe's Cottage: Lorraine Finlay, Volunteer Manager who has done so much to keep the Cottage open to the public and has

upgraded the interior, volunteers who worked in the garden on countless working bees – among them Tim Gatehouse, Beverley Joyce and Joy Harley, all the volunteer Guides, Helen Botham who researched La Trobe's garden, John and Helen Botham who organised the historic signage, and John Botham who featured the Cottage and its garden so beautifully on the Society's website.

Of course, without Sandi Pullman's horticultural expertise and dedication to creating this colonial garden from scratch, sourcing authentic plants and guiding the work in the garden, this award would not be achieved. As Garden Coordinator, Sandi is to be congratulated on this award.

Earlier in the year we were very fortunate to receive a donation of a survey plan of the area around La Trobe's Cottage. This plan is invaluable because we will be able to use it to create a landscape plan for the garden, document all services into the property and consider future developments. We sincerely thank La Trobe Society member Willys Keeble who organised the plan for us.

The last piece of good news is that talented landscape artist Jo Reitze is painting a view of the garden and donating the picture to the La Trobe Society for display at La Trobe's Cottage. Her style is colourful and vibrant and she has chosen a view that will in time be a valuable record of what the garden looked like in 2014. You will have to visit the Cottage to see the view she captured in her painting, which will be on display in the reception area for all to enjoy.



## *Forthcoming events*

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### **NOVEMBER**

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#### **Sunday 9**

**175th Anniversary of the laying of  
St James' Foundation Stone**

**Time:** 10.00am

**Venue:** St James' Old Cathedral, Cnr  
King & Batman Streets, West Melbourne

#### **Wednesday 12**

**La Trobe University Alumni and  
Advancement Lecture**

**Time:** 6.00-8.00pm

**Venue:** State Library Theatre,  
La Trobe Street, Melbourne

**Speaker:** Professor Tim Flannery  
Climate Change: the critical decade

#### **Friday 28**

**Christmas Cocktails**

**Time:** 6.00-8.30pm

**Venue:** Yarra Room, Melbourne Town  
Hall

**Speaker:** Eddie Butler-Bowden,  
Collections Manager at City of  
Melbourne  
Portraits in the Collection of the City of  
Melbourne  
Invitations will be sent to Members

### **DECEMBER**

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**Candlelit Carols at La Trobe's Cottage  
Not scheduled for 2014**

#### **Sunday 7**

**Commemoration:** Anniversary of the  
Death of C J La Trobe

**Time:** 11.00am-12.30pm

**Venue:** St Peter's Eastern Hill,  
15 Gisborne Street, Melbourne

**Advent Service – All welcome**

### **MARCH 2015**

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#### **Sunday 22**

**La Trobe's 214th Birthday  
celebrations**

**Time:** 4.00-6.00pm

**Venue:** Domain House and La Trobe's  
Cottage, Cnr Birdwood Avenue & Dallas  
Brooks Drive, Melbourne

**Speaker:** tbc

## Back Issues

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Back issues of La Trobeana are available on the Society's website, except for those published in the last twelve months.

The back issues may be accessed at [www.latrobesociety.org.au/LaTrobeana.html](http://www.latrobesociety.org.au/LaTrobeana.html)  
They may be searched by keyword.

## Contributions welcome

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**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/LaTrobeana.html](http://www.latrobesociety.org.au/LaTrobeana.html).

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BACK COVER  
La Trobe Family coat of arms

INSIDE FRONT COVER  
Charles Joseph La Trobe's coat of arms,  
taken from his bookplate



