# LA TROBEANA

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FRONT COVER
Thomas Woolner, 1825-1892, sculptor
Charles Joseph La Trobe, 1853
Bronze portrait medallion showing the left profile of Charles Joseph La Trobe, diam. 24cm.
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 Victoria, H5489

# Contents

# A Word from the President

The second edition of *La Trobeana* for 2018 is no exception to the established pattern, and contains a variety of significant articles based on valuable research by scholars in the field of colonial history.

Dr Doug McCann, who gave an excellent presentation at the Society's end-of-year event last year, has developed his research to contribute to these pages the article 'Charles Joseph La Trobe and the foundation of the Royal Society of Victoria'. As he so rightly points out, it was La Trobe who, 'more than any other influential person at the time, over a long period, desired, and actually argued for, the creation of a new viable general scientific society, and unquestionably helped bring it into being'.

'La Trobe's First Immigrants: the 1839 Voyage of the *David Clark*', which featured as the Friends of La Trobe's Cottage Annual Lecture in 2016, demonstrates Irene Kearsey's talent for research in the details she has discovered about those very early settlers. They included William Bell the founder of *Gulf Station*, who arrived on the first ship to bring assisted immigrants from Great Britain direct to Port Phillip. It makes fascinating reading.

No stranger to the pages of our journal is Professor Ian D. Clark, of Federation University, whose research interests, among others, embrace Aboriginal and colonial history. His paper, 'From Amiability to Acrimony: William Le Souëf and his relationships with George Augustus Robinson and Charles Joseph La Trobe'*,* is the first detailed examination of William Le Souëf, the relatively little-known fifth and final Assistant Protector in the Port Phillip Aboriginal Protectorate, and his relationships with both the Chief Protector and La Trobe.

Dr Max Waugh's article, 'A Beautiful Site for a Town: Governor Sir Richard Bourke and the establishment of the Port Phillip Settlement 1835-1837', transports us back to the earliest days of settlement. Captain William Lonsdale's appointment as resident Police Magistrate for Port Phillip and his arrival towards the end of 1836 led to the imposition of order on this new outpost of empire. Governor Bourke's visit to the settlement early in 1837, the development of Melbourne and the naming of its principal streets are described in detail, as well as Bourke's overland tour to Geelong and Mount Macedon, and back to Melbourne.

Susan Priestley's scholarly and witty article on the locally-made Testimonial Gold Vase, presented to La Trobe at the valedictory ball held in December 1853 prior to his departure from the colony the following May, gives a marvellously detailed account of its design and those who made this splendid creation. The later disappearance of the magnificent vessel into the mists of time is only slightly compensated by the presence, since 1986, at the National Gallery of Victoria of the glorious silver and glass candelabrum centrepiece which was purchased for La Trobe in London with remaining testimonial funds.

Professor Wallace Kirsop has contributed a valuable corollary to Dr Sylvia Whitmore's Melbourne Rare Book Week Lecture of last year, 'La Trobe, Lord Kingsborough and the *Antiquities of Mexico*' (*La Trobeana*, vol.16, no.3, November 2017), in which he expertly analyses the provenance of sets of this magnificent work in Australian libraries.

In summary, this edition provides a feast of reading on diverse topics with relevance to La Trobe.

**Diane Gardiner AM**
**Hon. President**
**C J La Trobe Society**

# Charles Joseph La Trobe and the foundation of the Royal Society of Victoria

### By Dr Doug McCann

**Doug McCann is a science historian and an honorary fellow at the School of Earth Sciences, University of Melbourne. He is co-editor and co-author of several books, including Burke and Wills: the Scientific Legacy of the Victorian Exploring Expedition (2011).**
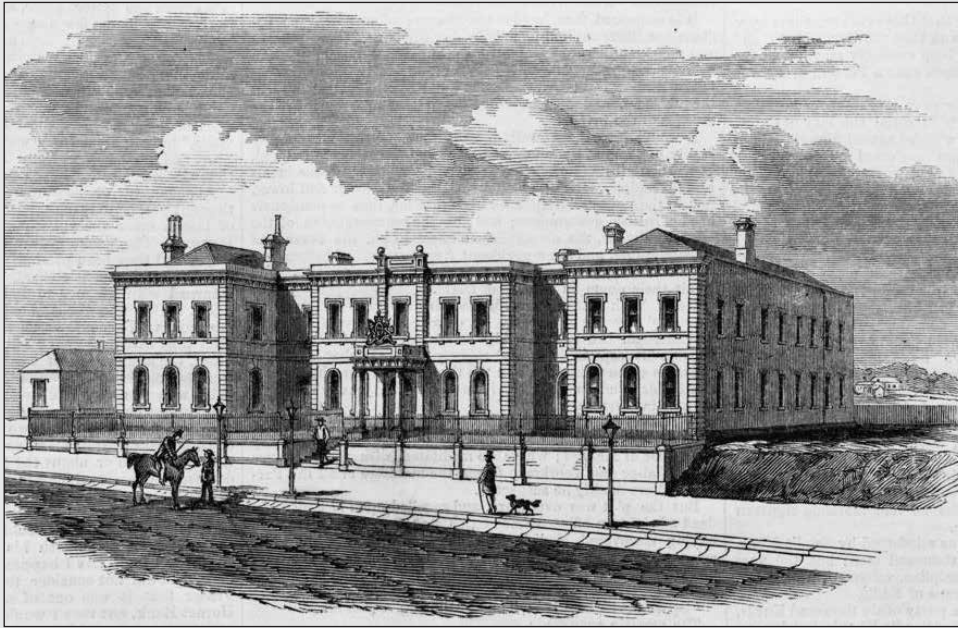
*This ground-breaking paper is a revised version of an address given to C J La Trobe Society members at the Royal Society of Victoria, 24 November 2017.*

Charles Joseph La Trobe (1801–1875), the Superintendent of the Port Phillip District of New South Wales (1839–1851) and Lieutenant-Governor of the fledgling Colony of Victoria (1851–1854), has been deservedly widely-praised by historians for his part in fostering, contributing to, and often initiating the foundation of many of Victoria's enduring public entities and cultural institutions. As historian Alan Gross stated: 'many of Melbourne's greatest institutions date from La Trobe's time'.[1] These institutions span a wide spectrum of social activities and cultural life, including schools and churches, the University of Melbourne, the Public Library, the Botanic Gardens, the Melbourne Benevolent Asylum, the Melbourne Hospital, the Mechanics' Institution, the Philharmonic Society, even the Yan Yean Reservoir, and many others.[2]

On the other hand, little has been written about La Trobe's influence on the formation of the Royal Society of Victoria. This omission is understandable because the Royal Society of Victoria, under that title, did not come into being until late in 1859, over five years after La Trobe had left Victoria. So, at first sight, his connection with the society might appear to be a little tenuous. To appreciate the connection of La Trobe with the Royal Society of Victoria however, we need to understand that the society had its direct origin in the foundation of two earlier scientific societies established in 1854 just a few weeks after La Trobe had left Victoria. The first of the new societies, the Victorian Institute for the Advancement of Science, was initiated at a public meeting on 15 June 1854. By this time La Trobe had already departed Victoria six weeks earlier, on 6 May 1854, on the steamship *Golden Age*, after a dutiful, and sometimes contentious, service of '14 years 7 months and 6 days'[3] as appointed leader of the settlement and colony. To comprehend La Trobe's influence on the founding of the new scientific societies in 1854 we need to examine the pre-history of these new entities and the incubation period of the study of natural history and science in Victoria from the late 1830s through to the early 1850s.

The omission of La Trobe from the history is even more striking in the only reasonably significant history of the Royal Society of Victoria written to date, by former

president R.T.M. Pescott, for the centenary of the society in 1959. The article titled 'The Royal Society of Victoria from then, 1854 to now, 1959' was published in the Society's *Proceedings* in 1961.[4] This otherwise comprehensive article makes no mention of La Trobe at all. One could argue that the omission could be justified as Pescott's brief history begins abruptly at 1854 with the foundation of the two precursor societies, namely, the Victorian Institute for the Advancement of Science and the Philosophical Society of Victoria. Pescott's history however, tends to make it appear a little as though the two new scientific societies arose, *de novo*, simply as a result of the massive influx of immigrants in the gold rush.

While this, of course, is generally true, it ignores the fact that there was already a small body of established naturalists, scientists, technicians, and interested individuals already in the Port Phillip District, and they also played a role in the setting up of the new societies. In fact, their prior experience probably contributed to the relatively smooth setting up of the new entities. Many of these individuals were members of, or were associated with, the Melbourne Mechanics' Institution. Some of them took key positions in the new societies, for example, Godfrey Howitt, David Wilkie, Redmond

Barry and Rev. Alexander Morison. Several of these members were natural history collectors and friends and supporters of Charles La Trobe. There were also a number of other pre-gold rush citizens who became 'Ordinary' members of the new societies, e.g., Rev. James Clow.

## *Victorian Institute for the Advancement of Science*

In early 1854 a move was made by Collins Street analytical chemist, William Sidney Gibbons, to form a scientific society in Melbourne. Gibbons was a member of the Melbourne Mechanics' Institution and had lectured there on scientific topics. After some lively discussions in the press a public meeting was convened on 15 June 1854 at the Mechanics' Institution which recommended that the nascent society should be named the Victorian Institute for the Advancement of Science. The Society's main aims were to provide a centre for scientists to meet and cross-communicate, but also to act as a source of scientific information for the community generally. Furthermore, they aimed to provide a centre for the collection of observations and of specimens, and to foster the development the colony's resources. The Lieutenant-Governor would be invited to be patron. The first president was Redmond Barry and the honorary secretary

was William Sidney Gibbons. The new society began with energy and optimism and appeared destined for great things.

At the inaugural conversazione, on 22 September, Acting Chief Justice Redmond Barry delivered an extended, lofty oration on the benefits that the new society would bring to the progress of science in Victoria and to the community generally. His speech was occasionally interspersed with references to classical figures like Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, and celebrated scientists such as Newton, La Place, Herschel and Galvani. Barry's first sentence neatly captures the prevailing early-Victorian attitude towards science with its reference to 'mutual improvement' and 'instruction'. He commenced: 'We assemble in the vestibule of the Temple of Science, many of us unacquainted one with the other, invited to engage in a course of mutual improvement, and to assist in the cause of general instruction'.[5]

However, later in his address, he warns his audience that lest we stray into 'cheerless sophistry' and 'empty materialism' we need to metaphorically look up 'from nature to nature's God' i.e., 'towards the great Author of Being'.[6] He points out how seamlessly 'Providence' has favoured European settlement with the inexorable displacement and demise of the Aboriginal population:

> One of the humblest races in the gradation of the human family has yielded to us the possession of the vast territory over which our people are now dispersed, and, by an inscrutable regulation of Providence, is waning before the access of civilization. By exertions unassisted from without, cities and towns have sprung up of a class and with a rapidity which challenge a parallel in former or contemporary history.[7]

Barry's implication apparently was that the decease of the Indigenous population was a natural process — essentially God's will — hence inevitable, so there is nothing to be gained by opposing it, and because it is unfathomable or 'inscrutable' there is little point in even questioning it. And also, of course, as Barry emphasised 'each new scientific application to economise labour and time' will assist that process and there are 'amongst us many gifted men of cultivated minds, fervid imagination, and intrepid temperament, who, curbed and confined elsewhere' will, in this unconstrained environment, be in the vanguard of innovation and industry. Barry and La Trobe shared a common world view. There would probably be



**William Blandowksi, 1822–1878, photographer**
**Self portrait, 1860**
Albumen silver photograph
National Gallery of Victoria, 1995.26.22.b
Government Zoologist of Victoria, 1854–1857

little in Barry's oration that La Trobe, or indeed, most of their contemporaries, would have disagreed with.

The second significant scientific society established in mid-1854 was the Philosophical Society of Victoria.

### Philosophical Society of Victoria

Just two days after the public meeting that led to the establishment of the Victorian Institute for the Advancement of Science another less well-attended, but more select, public meeting was held. On 17 June 1854 Captain Andrew Clarke, the Surveyor-General of the Colony, hosted the first meeting at his offices in the Crown Lands Building in La Trobe Street, where there already existed an embryonic Museum for Natural History, curated by recently appointed Government Zoologist William Blandowski. The original aim was to form a society known as the 'Victorian Philosophical and Literary Society' but Government Botanist Ferdinand Mueller persuaded them to settle on the title 'Philosophical Society of Victoria'. This new entity was established somewhat in opposition to the Victorian Institute for the Advancement of Science. It modelled itself on the more exclusive Royal Society of London rather than the more popular British Association for the Advancement of Science. The first President was Captain Andrew Clarke and part of the society's primary
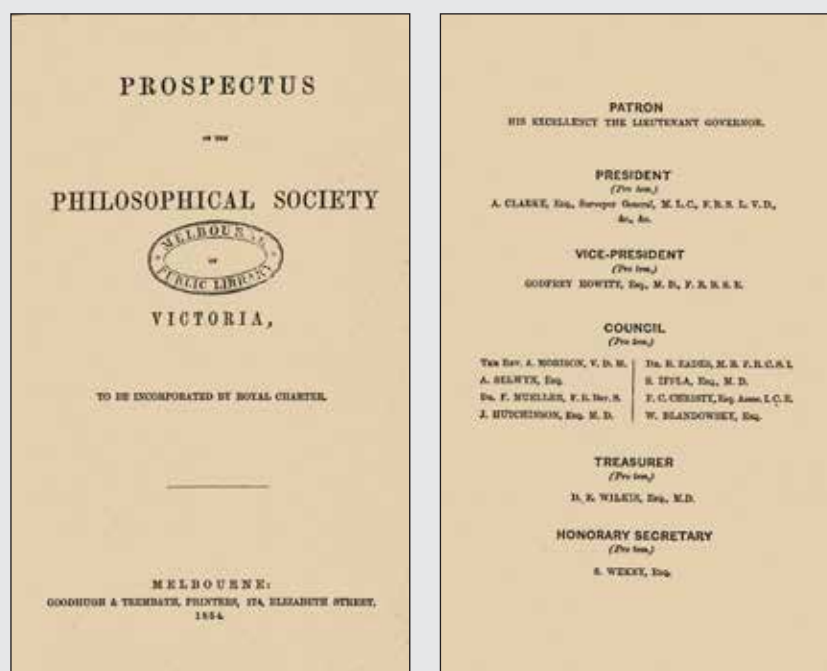
**Prospectus of the Philosophical Society of Victoria 1854,
title page and third page**
Rare Books Collection, State Library Victoria

task would be supporting the development of the Museum for Natural History.

Compared with Redmond Barry's inaugural address to the Victorian Institute Andrew Clarke's opening address was relatively routine and, mercifully, much shorter. In his opening remarks Clarke apologises for his apparent unworthiness for the task, but declares his 'zeal' for the welfare of the Society. Towards his conclusion he urges that 'the objects of our Institution will not be answered unless the geologist, the chemist, and the representative of the associated sciences conjointly labour to produce those results which have justly become the pride and glory of the civilised world'. In contrast to Redmond Barry's eloquent oration Clarke's comments were fairly mundane. Like Barry, Clarke was little more than a figurehead, but both societies prospered under their leadership.

As with the Victorian Institute for the Advancement of Science, the patron for the Philosophical Society of Victoria was Lieutenant-Governor Charles Hotham. Two honorary secretaries were elected, Sigismund Wekey and Robert Brough Smyth. The original aim for the Society was simply stated in the Philosophical Society of Victoria prospectus as 'embracing the whole field of science with a special reference to the cultivation of those departments that are calculated to develop the natural resources of the country'. The Philosophical Society of Victoria prospectus also indicated that the Society, from the beginning, would be seeking the grant of a 'Royal Charter' in order to assume the title of the 'Royal Society of Victoria'. This was a slow process however, and did not occur until late 1859, some five years later.

Prior to establishment of the two rival societies a keen debate had taken place in the *Argus* between William Sidney Gibbons and ex-Hungarian revolutionary Sigismund Wekey on the type of scientific society that should be established. The resulting situation, with two competing societies, was bemusing and somewhat farcical. Although both societies thrived alongside each other there was considerable cross-membership. Captain Andrew Clarke was elected President of the Philosophical Society but was recruited as Vice-President of the Victorian Institute as well. Government Botanist Ferdinand Mueller and Government Geologist Alfred Selwyn joined both societies, and moreover Mueller published papers in both societies' journals. On 28 November 1854, moves were initiated for an amalgamation of the two societies. This was duly achieved, but not without some initial misgivings on both sides. On 10 July 1855 the first meeting of the newly-formed Philosophical Institute of Victoria took place, with Captain Andrew Clarke as President, the new name being an amalgam of the two previous titles.

**Batchelder & Co., Melbourne, photographer**
**Dr Ferdinand Mueller, c.1865**
Carte de visite
Collection: Royal Historical Society of Victoria GN–GN–0114-004.
Government Botanist of Victoria, 1853-1896, and Director of the Melbourne Botanic Gardens, 1857-1873.

## Philosophical Institute of Victoria

For the next five years the fortunes of the Philosophical Institute inevitably waxed and waned, often depending on prevailing economic conditions, and there were some notable controversies, but, in general, the organisation went from strength to strength and made an important contribution to contemporary scientific and technical questions and to the cultural life of the community. Regular meetings and the publication of scientific research in the Society's *Transactions and Proceedings* was welcomed by the public and the Government. In late 1859 the main hall of a new building designed by architect Joseph Reed was completed. On 21 December 1859 at the annual general meeting in the new hall, President Ferdinand Mueller was able to congratulate the members on the occasion of meeting together in the new building. His concluding words of that speech have become an unofficial motto of the Royal Society:

> May the tempest of discord never re-echo from these walls! May every word resounding here be one expressive of friendly feelings, of philosophical thoughts, of elevated inspiration for all that is noble; and in aiming to fulfil the destiny for which we here are called, may our symbols be 'Concord and Progress'.[8]

Immediately prior to the completion of the new hall, on 8 November 1859, royal assent had finally been granted for a change of title of the 'Philosophical Institute of Victoria' to the 'Royal Society of Victoria'.

## Royal Society of Victoria

On 23 January 1860 at a special meeting in the new hall, Ferdinand Mueller, read a despatch from the Duke of Newcastle to the Governor Sir Henry Barkly as follows:[9]

> Downing Street,
> 8th November, 1859
>
> Sir,
>
> I have received your dispatch No. 70 of the 5th of August last, requesting, on behalf of the members of the Philosophical Institute of Victoria, of which you are the Patron, that Her Majesty will be pleased to permit that Society to assume the title of 'The Royal Society of Victoria'.
>
> Having laid this application before the Queen, I have much pleasure in informing you that Her Majesty has been graciously pleased to signify her assent to it, and to sanction and approve of the Philosophical Institute in future assuming the title of 'The Royal Society of Victoria'
>
> I have etc.
>
> (signed) Newcastle
>
> Governor Sir Henry Barkly, K.C.B.

So began the long, eventful, distinguished, and occasionally controversial, history of one of Melbourne's early iconic learned institutions, the Royal Society of Victoria.

The Royal Society made an important contribution to the public promotion of science and technology in Victoria in the formative years of the colony. It provided a meeting place and a forum for discussion for scientists, engineers, technologists and interested citizens. In the pages of the *Transactions and Proceedings* scientific papers were published covering a wide range of subjects and disciplines. Some papers were very practical and related to contemporary engineering projects and public works, e.g., the Yan Yean Reservoir, railway building and public health projects. Others encompassed the whole range of natural history including botany, zoology, geology, and environmental and conservation issues. There were also papers published on the physical sciences such as physics, astronomy and mathematics. Grand ventures such as the hugely successful Great Melbourne Telescope and the somewhat less successful (in fact, tragic) Burke and Wills expedition were proposed, argued, reported and written about in the pages of the *Transactions and Proceedings*. In the first thirty years or so of the Society's existence the *Transactions and Proceedings* was the only local recognised learned journal easily available for the publication of scientific and natural history research. This situation eventually changed with the progressive establishment of specialist societies and professional bodies who started publishing their own journals. Nevertheless, the Society's journal still continued to publish papers in a wide range of subjects and disciplines, including newer fields as they arose, such as anthropology.

The high status that the Philosophical Institute rapidly earned in the late 1850s, and by extension the Royal Society also, is indicated by the fact that the Governor Sir Henry Barkly took over the presidency from Ferdinand Mueller in 1860. Like Charles La Trobe, Henry Barkly had a genuine, abiding interest in science and he gave the Royal Society his wholehearted support. As fate would have it, Barkly presided over the aftermath of the Burke and Wills debacle and he probably saved the Society from possible extinction. Membership numbers of the Society were literally decimated after the disaster; membership plunged from over 300 to the high thirties. Barkly adeptly steadied the ship and steered the ailing organisation to safer waters. It took a number of years for membership numbers to recover, but having Barkly as steadfast custodian from 1860 to 1863 was fortunate for the beginning of the recovery process.

However, as mentioned previously, in order to appreciate the connection of La Trobe with the Royal Society of Victoria we need to understand the prehistory of the establishment of the Royal Society and its precursor societies, not just the Victorian Institute for the Advancement of Science and the Philosophical Society of Victoria, or the Philosophical Institute of Victoria, but also the Melbourne Mechanics' Institution. To do that we must go all the way back to La Trobe's arrival in Melbourne in 1839.

## La Trobe and the founding of the Melbourne Mechanics' Institution

La Trobe arrived in Melbourne on board the ship *Pyramus* from Sydney on 30 September 1839 as Superintendent of the Port Phillip District. His arrival coincided with the setting up of the Melbourne Mechanics' Institution and he was invited to be founding patron. William Lonsdale, the previous district administrator prior to La Trobe's arrival, was elected as the first president. La Trobe and Lonsdale 'largely distanced themselves from committee business, thus commanding respect in their roles'.[10] As Anne Marsden's book *The Making of the Melbourne Mechanics' Institution* shows it was a turbulent time with competing factions vying for dominance of the new institution; the initial protagonists being the 'gentlemen' and the 'mechanics'.[11] This was exacerbated by an economic downturn in 1841. La Trobe unfortunately was caught in the crossfire when the committee sought a land grant from Governor Gipps via the agency of La Trobe's offices. Gipps refused the grant, although he did offer limited financial support, but the committee reacted with resentful displeasure. La Trobe thought the committee's manifest umbrage was unjustified and withdrew his support as patron. Nevertheless, at a distance, La Trobe remained a supporter of the Institution. The committee on their part forged ahead, with funds being raised, a mortgage guaranteed, land purchased next to the present-day Town Hall in Collins Street, building plans approved, and a two-storey building constructed and occupied by 1842. It was a triumph of initiative, optimism, and astute land dealings by the committee.

Despite these early complications La Trobe maintained his concern for the affairs of the Institution and by the mid-1840s was again patron (this time as joint-patron). Like most of the mechanics' institutions elsewhere, the Melbourne Institution professed to encourage the dissemination of rational, or scientific, knowledge to the working classes, and moral elevation through 'rational amusement'. In practice, this rarely occurred as originally envisaged, and as society as a whole evolved so did the mechanics' institutions themselves. Most became community centres for a vast range of activities in both the arts and sciences, as well as more everyday activities. Many became lending libraries. Often the halls were used as meeting places for lectures, classes of various descriptions,
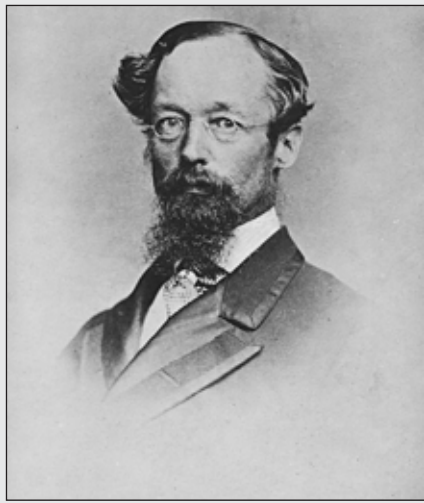
**Unknown photographer**
**Alfred Selwyn, 1870s**
Photographic print, gelatin silver
Pictures Collection, State Library Victoria, H83.86/1
Director of the Geological Survey of Victoria,
1852–1869

dance halls, music venues, playhouses, billiards rooms, and a variety of other social activities. The Melbourne Mechanics' Institution was no exception and did not escape these shifting trends.

One such change of focus of activities at the Melbourne Mechanics' Institution occurred not long after its foundation, where, as Colin Finney in *Paradise Revealed* explains, by '1843 the Institute had been captured by a scientific coterie who virtually turned it into a scientific club'.[12] Several of these men were physicians or surgeons. Finney further observes that 'by the mid–1840s a small band of men interested in natural history had formed in Port Phillip, and many were associated with the Melbourne Mechanics' Institution. Superintendent Charles La Trobe, "a man of a thousand occupations; a botanist, a geologist, a hunter of beetles and butterflies…", stood at their head socially.'[13] These men included, for example, Godfrey Howitt, a surgeon and avid naturalist with an interest in botany and entomology; Edmund Hobson, surgeon and dedicated collector of natural history specimens; Augustus Greeves, surgeon with an interest in geology; William Westgarth, merchant and historian, with a keen interest in natural history generally; George Gilbert, art teacher, secretary of the Mechanics' Institution, and interested in natural history; and David Wilkie, physician, also with a strong interest in natural history.

A museum was established with several thousand specimens, and specialist honorary curators for the collection were appointed.

Towards the peak in the mid–1840s there were eight honorary curators and a taxidermist. The list of specialities included zoology and comparative anatomy, ornithology, conchology, entomology and botany, geology and mineralogy, Aborigines and miscellaneous [*sic*], numismatics and antiquities, and fine arts. The specimens included rocks, minerals, fossils, plants, even Aboriginal skeletons, and objects and artefacts of all descriptions. La Trobe was a devoted naturalist and active collector and donated a number of rocks and fossils that he collected on some of his many forays into the Victorian countryside, including 'a large box of minerals and fossils' and 'fossils from Cape Otway'. The dominance of this natural history group was fairly brief however; the library and the reading room, classrooms and the lecture hall of the Mechanics' Institution were what the public were most interested in. After a promising start, lack of space and sparse funding soon brought museum activities to a standstill to the frustration of all concerned.

From his correspondence it is clear that La Trobe had an enduring interest in natural history and was ever ready to examine new specimens and deliberate on the latest findings.[14] In the mid–1840s Tasmania (still Van Diemen's Land until 1855) had the only established scientific society in Australia, the Tasmanian Society led by Ronald Gunn. The naturalists of the Melbourne Mechanics' Institution, including Edmund Hobson, Godfrey Howitt, William Westgarth and Charles La Trobe were all corresponding members. Hobson, in fact, had been a foundation member and also published articles in their journal *Tasmanian Journal of Natural Science* which was the only established viable forum for the publication of natural history during the 1840s.[15] La Trobe and Gunn became firm friends. La Trobe served as acting Lieutenant-Governor of Van Diemen's Land for four months in 1846-47. During his time in Tasmania he became closely associated with the local naturalists and scientists, as well as revelling in the natural environment. He won respect when he attempted a reconciliation between the bickering Tasmanian Society (of Ronald Gunn) and the Royal Society of Van Diemen's Land (established by Lieutenant-Governor Sir John Eardley-Wilmot; sanctioned in 1844 as the first Royal Society established outside the United Kingdom). A rapprochement was finally achieved when in 1848 Gunn was admitted into the Royal Society of Van Diemen's Land without ballot.

La Trobe's correspondence and discussions with Tasmanian naturalist Ronald Gunn are interesting and intriguing, especially their discussion of the reputed 'bunyip' skull found

**Unknown artist**
**Melbourne Mechanics' Institution, Collins Street, Melbourne, 1850s**
Collection: Royal Historical Society of Victoria, GS-EM-02
This image depicts the original Melbourne Mechanics' Institution building at 188 Collins Street built in 1842. Major extensions were carried out in 1856, 1872 and 1886. There were also renovations in 1910, 1913 and 1924. Meetings of the Corporation of Melbourne (now the Melbourne City Council) were held in the Mechanics' Institution building until 1854 when the Town Hall was completed. Meetings of the Philosophical Institute of Victoria were held here from 1856 until the Royal Society building was completed in 1859.



**John T. Collins, 1907–2001, photographer**
**Melbourne, Royal Society, Victoria Street, 1963**
Pictures Collection, State Library Victoria H98.252/1058
This image, taken from a Victoria Parade and Rathdowne Street perspective, depicts the north-east side of the building, which was designed by architect Joseph Reid in 1859 (with subsequent alterations in 1869 and 1880). Major extensions took place in 1953, with a new south wing converting the former rectangular building into a square shape, and the La Trobe Street entrance created. Further refurbishments took place in 1993. The Royal Society of Victoria is the only Royal Society in Australia that has managed to retain ownership of its own building.

on the banks of the Murrumbidgee in 1847. La Trobe was characteristically open-minded about it, but Gunn was more cautious. The local consensus determined that it was a misshapen hydrocephalic skull of a foal or calf. This opinion was endorsed in Britain by Richard Owen. While in hindsight La Trobe may be judged as a little naïve and uncritical, bunyip reports were extremely widespread, including from the Barwon River in Geelong (as reported by William Buckley) where La Trobe often travelled. In the 1840s the existence of the bunyip was apparently universally believed by Aboriginal people and also by many early settlers.[16] La Trobe's interest in natural history was to a degree influenced by the natural theology tradition with its emphasis more on the marvels of nature than on hard empirical science. The bunyip episode, as with similar issues, highlights La Trobe's inquisitive and enquiring intellect, especially when it came to natural history, but also a truly even-handed, unprejudiced personality overall.

### The Geological Society of Victoria

Following separation of the Port Phillip District from New South Wales in 1851, and the onset of the gold rush, with an accompanying huge increase in the population, there was immediate pressure and opportunity to establish new institutions and infrastructure. Victoria now had a Legislative Council and La Trobe was appointed Lieutenant-Governor with considerable power.[17] With so much activity on the goldfields La Trobe realised that one of the more pressing needs was for setting up a Geological Survey, as in Great Britain, run by a competent mineralogist. As with La Trobe's 1853 appointment of Ferdinand Mueller as Government Botanist, Victoria was fortunate in his choice of Government Geologist Alfred R. C. Selwyn, who proved to be extremely capable. Selwyn arrived in December 1852. La Trobe's later appointment in April 1854 of naturalist William Blandowski as Government Zoologist in retrospect proved to be a little more problematical.

In early October 1852, just prior to Selwyn's arrival, Blandowski and a small group of naturalists and miners met to discuss the formation of a 'Royal Geological Society of Victoria'. The objects stated were 'the advancement of geological science in Australia, and the development of the varied mineral resources of the Colony'. The resulting Geological Society of Victoria was the first specialist scientific society in Australia. The new Society decided to approach La Trobe and the Legislative Council for funding and accommodation. A report on that meeting in the *Argus* gives an insight into La Trobe's sober attitude towards requests for patronage for causes he would ordinarily provisionally support:

On Thursday last (30th Dec.) a deputation from the above Society, consisting of G. M. Stephen, Esq., the Vice-President, T. T. a'Beckett, M.L.C., Dr Thomas, Alderman Hodgson, and W. S. Gibbons, Esq., the Secretary, presented to His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, a Memorial signed by all the Officers of the Society, etc., praying him to place a sum of money on the Estimates, for the purpose of purchasing a cabinet of minerals and providing means of securing them. The deputation on the part of the Society also invited His Excellency to become its President. His Excellency received the deputation very graciously, accepted the post of President, and promised to give the Society his cordial support. But he thought it too late in the Session to place any additional sum on the Estimates, and considered it wiser to work the Society for six months, before coming to Council to ask for pecuniary aid. He also intimated the wish, that the Society should have more extended objects: to embrace the whole range of natural history; and he eulogised the proceedings of the Royal Society of Van Diemen's Land.

The Vice-President stated that it was the opinion of many experienced gentlemen in the colony, that it was highly desirable to nurse a young society by itself, and not to peril its stability by amalgamating with older societies which were already somewhat neglected; for that in such cases every one supposed that there were others attending to the business, and hence nobody attended it.

After some desultory conversation, in which His Excellency admitted that he had felt chagrined at seeing valuable specimens he had presented to the Mechanic's Institute, tossed aside and covered with dust, the deputation withdrew, impressed with the necessity of trusting to their own exertions.[18]

What is notable about the Geological Society of Victoria delegation's meeting with La Trobe is that it took place on the 30 December, the day before La Trobe tended his resignation as Lieutenant-Governor. La Trobe sent off his resignation to England on 31 December 1852, the last day of the year. Yet during the meeting La Trobe 'accepted the post of President, and promised to give the Society his cordial support'. Obviously he was aware it would be some months before he could be relieved, nevertheless, the coincidence of events, and his promise of on-going support, yet knowing he would be soon leaving, seems slightly incongruous. La Trobe's cautious conditional support for the Geological Society of Victoria however, proved to be prudent. After a series of meetings over a time span of less than a year the Geological Society of Victoria simply faded away.

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The considered advice that La Trobe gave urging a broader based society with 'more extended objects' was obviously taken to heart by William Sidney Gibbons, who was a member of the delegation, and a member of the Mechanics' Institution. As described earlier in this article it was Gibbons who in 1854 initiated a discussion in the press that led to the formation of the Victorian Institute for the Advancement of Science, a scientific society that largely fitted the parameters that La Trobe had defined. By 1854 Victoria now had sufficient material means, and a critical mass of scientists and intellectuals, to support this new initiative. At the same time, on a slightly different trajectory, the Philosophical Society came into being. As also mentioned previously, a significant number of the founding members in both societies had links with La Trobe and also with the societies established earlier, i.e., the Melbourne Mechanics' Institution and the Geological Society of Victoria — both of them supported and greatly influenced by input from La Trobe personally.

As discussed by Dianne Reilly,[19] La Trobe was a strong supporter of the concept of founding both a public library and a university which would advance the arts and sciences and contribute to the moral improvement of the colony. In the case of the university La Trobe, Barry and Hugh Childers were kindred spirits who jointly helped to bring it into reality, although, as Geoffrey Blainey, points out, 'La Trobe, Childers and Barry, and other leading citizens gave enthusiasm and intellect to the consummation of this idea, but in no sense can any individual be called the founder'.[20] Exactly the same could be said of the Royal Society of Victoria (and its precursors). Barry, as discussed, was founding president of the Victorian Institute for the Advancement of Science, one of the Royal Society of Victoria's precursors; Childers was a founding member of the Philosophical Society of Victoria, the other of the Royal Society of Victoria's precursors. As occasion would have it, each of these institutions came into material being just a few weeks after La Trobe had left the colony but he deserves acknowledgement for his longstanding, consistent public promotion of science and of the specific concept of a broad-based scientific society. La Trobe's administrative impetus and personal influence on the conception and creation of such a colonial scientific society was significant and profound. The subsequent Royal Society of Victoria is one of the enduring learned institutions that had its genesis in a singularly vigorous and expansive time in Victoria's history under an intellectually enlightened, but long under-appreciated, administrator in Charles Joseph La Trobe.

## Acknowledgement

**Endnotes**

**1** Alan Gross, *Charles Joseph La Trobe: Superintendent of the Port Phillip District 1839-1851: Lieutenant-Governor of Victoria 1851-1854*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1956, p.68.

**2** See Gross, pp.66-68; Dianne Reilly Drury, *La Trobe: the making of a governor,* Melbourne: Melbourne: University Press, 2006, pp.173-179; John Barnes, *La Trobe: traveller, writer, governor*, Canberra, Halstead Press, in association with State Library Victoria and La Trobe University, 2017, pp.165, 301-302,

**3** As recorded 5 May 1854, Dianne Reilly (ed.), *Charles Joseph La Trobe: Australian Notes 1839-1854*, Yarra Glen, Vic.: Tarcoola Press, State Library of Victoria and Boz Publishing, 2006, p.226.

**4** R.T.M. Pescott, 'The Royal Society of Victoria: from then, 1854 to now, 1959', *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Victoria*, vol. 73, 1961, pp.1-40.

**5** Inaugural address delivered by Mr Justice Barry, President of the Institute, 22nd September 1854, *Transactions and Proceedings of the Victorian Institute for the Advancement of Science for the sessions 1854-1855*, p.1.

**6** Ibid, p.14.

**7** Ibid, p.4.

**8** Pescott, p.16; 'Address of the President, Ferdinand Mueller', *Transactions [and Proceedings] of the Philosophical Institute of Victoria,* vol.4, 1860, p.210. Note that in the *Proceedings* it states that at the Annual General Meeting held on 21 December 1859: 'Dr Mueller then delivered a very eloquent address, appropriate to the occasion of the opening of the new Hall, after which the Institute separated.[*Vide* "Transactions."]'. However, in the *Transactions*, p.204, under the heading 'Address of the President, Ferdinand Mueller', it states that it was: 'Delivered to the Members of the Institute at the Inauguration of the Hall, January 23rd, 1860'. There is a discrepancy here, further research is necessary.

**9** Pescott, p.14.

**10** Anne Marsden, *The Making of the Melbourne Mechanics' Institution: the movers and shakers of pre-goldrush Melbourne*, Melbourne: Anne Marsden in association with The Melbourne Athenaeum Inc and State Library of Victoria., 2016, p.81.

**11** Ibid, pp.23-37.

**12** Colin Finney, *Paradise Revealed: Natural History in Nineteenth-Century Australia*, Melbourne: Museum of Victoria, 1993, p.68.

**13** Ibid, p.72.

**14** L J. Blake (ed.), *Letters of Charles Joseph La Trobe*, Melbourne: Government of Victoria, 1975.

**15** Finney, p.70.

**16** See Ian D. Clark, 'A Fascination with Bunyips: Bunbury, La Trobe, Wathen and the Djab Wurrung people of Western Victoria, *La Trobeana*, vol.17, no.1, March 2018, pp.27-39.

**17** Jill Eastwood, 'La Trobe, Charles Joseph (1801-1875)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1967, Vol.2, p.91.

**18** *Argus*, 1 January 1853, reproduced in Lech Paszkowski, 'William Blandowski: the first Government Zoologist of Victoria', *The Australian Zoologist*, vol.14, 1967-68, p.150.

**19** Reilly Drury, p.178.

**20** Geoffrey Blainey, *A Centenary History of the University of Melbourne*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1957, p.209.

Nicolas Cammillieri,
1762/73–1860, artist (attrib.)
Ship 'David Clark' coming
into the harbour of Malta, 1820
Watercolour and ink on paper
Private collection Lance Pymble

# La Trobe's first Immigrants: passengers from the 'David Clark', 1839

**By Irene Kearsey**

Irene Kearsey, a La Trobe's Cottage guide, also volunteers at Gulf Station, the historic farm at Yarra Glen managed by the National Trust. Other roles include preparing research reports for the National Trust on public art to be registered. As a member of the La Trobe Society, she participated in the project at Public Record Office Victoria of indexing the Inward Correspondence to La Trobe, 1839–1851. Irene is a long-term volunteer at PROV and continues to work on projects to preserve and digitise records of state significance.

Williaml Bell, who as an adult established *Gulf Station*, came to the Port Phillip District with his parents and siblings in 1839 on the *David Clark*, the first ship to bring assisted immigrants from Great Britain direct to Port Phillip.[1] I began researching the man for whom the ship was named;[2] that led to researching the 1839 voyage and then to the ship's passengers.[3] This paper is derived from the Friends of La Trobe's Cottage annual lecture 2016 and describes how some of those immigrants maintained contact with La Trobe after their arrival.

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On 29 October 1839, a month after taking up duties as Superintendent of the Port Phillip District, Charles Joseph La Trobe welcomed the first ship to arrive with assisted immigrants direct to the District.[4] He did this in person by going on board as the ship anchored in Williamstown. He was accompanied by the Chairman of the Immigration Board Dr John Patterson, Charles Henry Le Souef,[5] Dr Patrick Edward Cussen and Captain William Lonsdale (who took the opportunity of employing one of the passengers as a housemaid).

La Trobe was given 'three cheers' by the immigrants while he gave them 'needful advice', however none of the passengers took up the offer of the 'Governor's secretary [*sic*] of employment' who hoped to employ 'about 20 of the young men at 18 shillings a week and rations'. They were banking on better offers once they went ashore.[6]

The *David Clark* was an ex-East Indiaman cargo ship, newly converted for passengers. She had sailed from Greenock, west of Glasgow, on 13 June. During the voyage one baby was born

**Irene Kearsey, photographer**
**Royal Botanic Gardens**
**Melbourne directors, 2018**
Rockface near Gate H,
Alexandra Avenue
First curator of the Botanic Gardens
John Arthur 1846-1849

and one passenger died. The ship's Surgeon Archibald Gilchrist's journal records the cause of death as 'peritonitis'. He could not perform a post mortem but the symptoms certainly resembled appendicitis.[7] The 229 passengers were all Scots, bringing skills the new settlement desperately needed. The local Greenock newspaper declared that they were 'chiefly agriculturalists, and from their appearance and behaviour... evidently much superior to the ordinary class of emigrants'.[8] La Trobe was able to report to the Colonial Secretary in Sydney on 5 November, one week after the ship's arrival, that 'most *David Clarke* [*sic*] immigrants have found positions'.[9]

La Trobe's first involvement with one of the passengers was the immediate appointment of the shepherd Archibald McIntyre as overseer of convict road gangs. This unlikely skills match, unsurprisingly, did not turn out well. On 3 December, La Trobe recorded that McIntyre had been 'informed that, in consequence of another arrangement having been made… there will be no occasion for his service as overseer of roads'. A gentle dismissal, but La Trobe was more forthright in reporting to Governor Gipps the following day that McIntyre was: 'apparently destitute of the many qualities necessary to one in that station'.[10] I have been unable so far to find out what happened to Archibald McIntyre after this setback, but there are traces of his wife Elizabeth and three of the four children later in her life.[11]

The widowed Christina Stewart travelled with her five-year-old son Duncan and her brothers Alexander and James Menzies. In November 1839, the third Earl of Sefton wrote a letter to Lord John Russell, the Colonial Secretary, recommending that the family be granted land; Russell wrote to Governor Gipps

who in turn referred the matter to La Trobe. This correspondence chain took until May 1840. La Trobe made enquiries to find the family and invited Christina to tea at *Jolimont*, when he explained there was nothing he was able do for them.[12] A possible topic of conversation over the tea table was the condition of the Aboriginal people: La Trobe's concern is well known and Christina, from her first arrival, recorded in her journal her concern for their plight.[13] Later, after re-marrying and moving, first to Rivoli Bay near Mount Gambier then later to Mount Gambier itself, Christina worked for the welfare of the local Aboriginal people, establishing a school for them in 1885. In 1880 she published *The Booandik Tribe of South Australian Aborigines: a sketch of their habits, customs, legends and language*s.[14] Christina has an entry in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography,* the only *David Clark* immigrant to be recorded in this publication.[15] Her son Duncan learned the local language so well that at fourteen, he was appointed as official interpreter.[16]

Two of the passengers, John Arthur and John McEwin, were horticulturalists who continued their contact with La Trobe through his botanic interests. Both brought seeds and cuttings from Scotland and settled in Heidelberg, managing their individual horticultural businesses.

John McEwin, in addition to his own horticultural skills, also brought sons who influenced horticulture in New Zealand, South Australia and Victoria. His son Andrew went to New Zealand and published on horticulture there;[17] George (not a *David Clark* passenger) emigrated to South Australia in 1839 and was similarly influential.[18] Peter became Curator of Heidelberg Botanic Garden and by 1932 a grandson and a great-grandson were on the

**Unknown photographer**
**Former Yarra Flats**
**Common School, No.956**
Yarra Glen and District
Historical Society
Erected 1866, the building
served as a schoolroom and
a place for Presbyterian
worship. After 1878 it
became a men's meeting place

staff of Burnley Horticultural College.[19] John McEwin is reputed by a descendant to have provided plants for the Melbourne Botanic Gardens and even to have selected the eventual site of the Gardens, although a similar claim is made by a daughter of John Arthur on her father's behalf. After the death of John Arthur, the first superintendent of the Melbourne Botanic Gardens, McEwin may have stood in before the next appointment.[20]

John Arthur held horticultural qualifications from Scotland and had held prestigious appointments before emigrating.[21] On arrival, Arthur himself employed a fellow passenger, James Joiss, to plant and tend the plants he had brought from Scotland. Joiss later ran his own horticultural business in the Brighton area.[22] This arrangement enabled Arthur to take well-paid employment at *Chelsworth* in Ivanhoe, the estate of Captain George Brunswick Smyth who, like La Trobe, was a member of the Melbourne Club.[23] As Ivanhoe is close to Heidelberg, Arthur was able to manage his own business importing seeds,[24] and later apparently operate a shop in Little Bourke Street.[25] After a year or so, Arthur took on a lease of a part of *Chelsworth*. His daughter Grace remembered in later life that La Trobe asked her father 'to find a suitable place for a [botanic] garden, as he was well qualified for the job',[26] with Arthur becoming the first curator/superintendent. The appointment put him in regular contact with La Trobe.[27] In March 1847 the *Port Phillip Gazette* reported:

> We have great satisfaction in noticing the progress which the botanical garden is making under the careful superintendence of Mr Arthur. The part of the reserve now inclosed [*sic*] is already in a high state of culture, and contains the whole of the plants indigenous to the country, and the

rarer plants from England and India. The ground is very tastefully laid out, and already forms a delightful walk for persons from Melbourne. In another year this will be a delightful spot.[28]

Sadly, in January 1849, John Arthur died.

The evidence for one contact with La Trobe exists as a family heirloom although the history of the artefact is a family mystery. Archibald McMillan arrived with wife and ten children but only five shillings in his pocket — and that had been earned during the voyage. McMillan and his working-age children pooled their earnings and, with the funds managed by matriarch Catherine (Kate), very quickly acquired a herd of cows on forty-two acres (seventeen hectares) in Brighton. Eventually the family amassed vast land-holdings and a huge fortune.[29] McMillan was active in public life, including as one of the first Trustees of the Brighton Cemetery.[30] This may be the reason for a presentation portrait of La Trobe which the family still holds. It is the mezzotint (ca.1857) by Samuel Bellin of the 1855 Sir Francis Grant portrait and is inscribed 'etching [*sic*] of Charles Joseph Latrobe, Lt Governor of Victoria, presented to Archibald McMillan by Latrobe.'[31]

William Bell senior with his wife and children settled at Kangaroo Ground a year or so after arrival and they were joined by several other *David Clark* families.[32] In 1851 on his way to Yering, La Trobe visited the Bells' house *Hitchill* at Kangaroo Ground. Possibly this was a regular stop for La Trobe on his visits to friends in the Yarra Valley. For such an important visitor, one might imagine the *David Clark* neighbours also being present. Hearing that the residents of Kangaroo Ground planned to build a school house, La Trobe made a generous personal donation of ten pounds towards the project.[33] It has been suggested that La Trobe recommended the new building should

**Mike Ridley, photographer**
**School house Gulf Station,**
**Yarra Glen, 2018**
In the early 1900s the former
dual-purpose schoolroom
and church was moved closer
to other farm buildings at
Gulf Station

**Charles Joseph La Trobe,**
**1801–1875, artist**
**The Inn, Mount Sturgeon, 1850**
Sketched in a letter to Sophie La Trobe,
12 March 1850
Australian Manuscripts Collection,
State Library Victoria, H15618



serve as both school and place of worship, as he had recommended in his West Indian reports on the educational needs of the emancipated slaves,[34] because such a combined building was erected in Kangaroo Ground around that date.[35] When Yarra Flats (later Yarra Glen) needed a school and a place for Presbyterian worship, William Bell's son, William, and son-in-law Thomas Armstrong were owners of *Gulf Station*. They became involved as two of a six-man committee formed to select a site, then two of the ten trustees, and eventually two of four-man management committee for the combined building,[36] which was erected in 1866 on *Gulf Station* land.[37]

On one of La Trobe's many journeys around the Port Phillip District he visited Mount Sturgeon (Dunkeld) on 11 March 1850,[38] staying at the *Woolpack Inn* run by Andrew and Jacobina Templeton with a partner Samuel Woodhead.[39] He remarked in his notes that it was 'much improved'.[40] In a letter the next morning to his wife Sophie,[41] La Trobe included a little sketch of the inn at 'the foot of the Grampians Mountains'.

David Armstrong, after an initial spell as a blacksmith, went gold prospecting in California before returning to Melbourne. Settler John Wood Beilby[42] corresponded with La Trobe in June 1851, claiming there was workable gold in the Navarre and Amherst districts. After a meeting with Beilby, La Trobe organised an investigating party that included Armstrong.[43] Perhaps La Trobe already knew Armstrong, or at least of Armstrong and his experience of gold prospecting. After gold was later found, Armstrong was appointed a Gold

Commissioner, initially for Ballarat, where he was painted, standing at the flap of his tent, by William Strutt. In 1853, La Trobe appointed Armstrong as a magistrate.[44]

As several of the *David Clark* passengers took employment with friends and colleagues of La Trobe, it is possible that there were further meetings. Mary Mouncie was William Lonsdale's housemaid; Eliza Shiels and Allan McKenzie were employed by Dr Farquhar McCrae; Agnes Edgar, John, Duncan and Alexander McMillan (sons of Archibald) and Margaret McMillan (daughter of Archibald's brother John) were employed by Captain Sylvester John Brown. In addition to John Arthur, Captain Smyth also employed John Mathieson.

Other *David Clark* passengers took employment in businesses that are likely to have provided services to the La Trobes' *Jolimont* household: for instance, Peter Forman and Neil Mathieson were employed by Melbourne's first butcher, John McNall; and Alexander Beith worked for Melbourne's first baker, William Overton. When La Trobe laid the foundation stone of St James' church on 9 November 1839, he may have recognised Archibald McMillan and James Lawrie, employed by Alexander Sim, the builder.

On the day of his departure from Melbourne on 5 May 1854, La Trobe held a levee in the Government Offices. The list in the press of those attending unfortunately provides only surname and initials, so firm identification is not possible. However, it seems very likely that 'Armstrong, D' is in fact David Armstrong, the

**William Strutt, 1825–1915, artist**
**Thomas Ham, 1821–1870, engraver**
**Commissioner's tent Ballarat, (1851) 1854**
Engraving coloured
Rex Nan Kivell Collection, National Library of Australia, NK11266/F
Shows a group of troopers at Golden Point, Ballarat, with
Commissioner Armstrong in the entrance to the tent

ex-Gold Commissioner.[45] No other *David Clark* passenger names appear on the list but, by 1854, many of those first assisted immigrants were well established outside Melbourne, a few had died, and others may not have had the 'morning dress' required for attending the levee. Some were certainly among the 3,000 people described as thronging the streets and bay foreshore to wish La Trobe farewell.[46]

Over La Trobe's fifteen tumultuous years in office, it is likely that his memory of his first immigrants had faded, but it is hoped that he would have been pleased with their progress. I have found at least something about most of the *David Clark* passengers and, with only a few misfortunes, they made at least a modest success of their new lives. A first clue to finding these individuals in newspapers, via the National Library of Australia's database *Trove*, has often been the proud note in a death notice that mentions the deceased's year of arrival or that they came on the *David Clark*. This passenger ship made no other voyage to Melbourne, although she did make other voyages to Hobart and to Sydney. Indeed, one descendant, at the celebrations marking the 100th anniversary of arrival, proudly described the ship as 'Victoria's *Mayflower*'.[47]

### Endnotes

**1** Some assisted immigrants had arrived in Port Phillip earlier in 1839, but they had been sent on from Sydney as 'not needed' there.

**2** David Clark (1779-1838), was born in Scotland but went to India to join an important partnership of East India merchants, the senior partner being William Fairlie (probably his uncle). The partners named four cargo ships after themselves. After the partnership failed in 1833, the ships were sold and converted to passenger ships: one of them, the *Fergusson*, brought La Trobe and his family to Sydney in 1839. After the failure David Clark returned to London; he is buried in the crypt of St Marylebone Parish Church, London.

**3** For the spelling of the passengers' names, I have used the most accurate version I can find (e.g. in a will or other official document) where that differs from that recorded in the passenger list at PROV VPRS 14, Register of assisted immigrants from the United Kingdom P1 Book, giving name, family relationship, trade, employer and conditions (where appropriate).

**4** PROV VPRS 4, Inward Registered Correspondence, Police Magistrate, Port Phillip District, P0 unit 7, item Folder No: 91.

**5** La Trobe's *Australian Notes* (refer endnote 34) p.83, and other sources, say 'Mr Le Souef'. This was Charles Henry Le Souef, son of William Le Souëf and tide waiter (inspector) in the Customs department. (Edmund Finn, 'Garryowen', *The Chronicles of Early Melbourne, 1835 to 1852: historical, anecdotal and personal*. Melbourne: Fergusson & Mitchell, 1888, p.45)

**6** Keith Rees, *Menzies from the Innerwick Inn Glen Lyon, 1761*, [Ballarat, Vic.: privately published] 2013, pp.93-94, 242.

**7** National Archives (UK), ADM 101/76/8, Medical journal of the emigrant ship David Clark, from 6 June to 2 November 1839.

**8** *Greenock Advertiser*, 14 June 1839, *Caledonian Mercury*, Edinburgh, 15 June 1839 p.3.

**9** *Historical Records of Victoria*, Vol.4, *Communications, Trade and Transport*, ed. by Michael Cannon, Melbourne: Victorian Government Printing Office 1985, p.330-331. (In many sources the ship's name is spelled 'Clarke' with an 'e'.)

**10** *Historical Records of Victoria*, Vol.3, *The Early Development of Melbourne*, ed. by Michael Cannon, Melbourne: Victorian Government Printing Office 1984, p.328.

**11** The McIntyre family has a singular distinction: one daughter, Ann, died in 1851 and was buried in the Melbourne Cemetery, with Elizabeth added in 1857; another daughter, Christina Henderson, was added to the grave in 1903 and Christina's daughter, Jean Hamilton Henderson, was buried there in 1917, being the last burial before the cemetery was finally closed. (*Old Melbourne Cemetery: information collation stage 2,* documentation draft report prepared for City of Melbourne, 2013: City of Melbourne public access version, 2017, p.81.)

**12** Rees, p.243.

**13** Ibid, p.242.

**14** Government Printer, South Australia, 1880. Reprinted in 1965 and 2001.

**15** Leith G. MacGillvray, 'Smith, Christina (1809–1893)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography, Supplement, 1580-1980*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2005, p.364.

**16** Provenance, 'Duncan Stewart', http://archives.samuseum.sa.gov.au/aa307/provlist.htm (accessed 3 March 2018)

**17** Andrew McEwin, *The Best Method of Saving Seeds* (1871) and a section in *Chapman's Settler's Hand-book to the Farm and Garden, arranged for the seasons & climate of New Zealand* (1870), both published by Geo. T. Chapman, Auckland.

**18** George McEwin, *Catalogue of Plants introduced into South Australia by George Stevenson Esq., and grown at Melbourne Cottages, North Adelaide* (c.1840-43), *The South Australian Vigneron and Gardeners' Manual* (1843), and *A Description of the Adelaide Botanic Garden* (1875), all self-published, Adelaide.

**19** *Australasian*, 11 June 1832, p.4.

**20** Grace Arthur Barr, Life history of John Arthur: Melbourne's first botanical gardener, Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library Victoria, MS 10315.

**21** Barr recorded that John Arthur was head gardener for the Duke of Argyle for five years, followed by a similar appointment at Dumbarton Castle. On the day of departure he piped out the *David Clark* to the tune of *Lochaber No More*.

**22** *Argus*, 30 January 1871, p.3.

**23** La Trobe was an honorary member of the Melbourne Club; in 1844 he was invited to become a full member, with no ballot being taken. (John Barnes, *La Trobe: traveller, writer, governor,* Canberra, Halstead Press in association with State Library Victoria and La Trobe University, 2017, p.180.)

**24** *Port Phillip Patriot and Melbourne Advertiser*, 30 September 1841, p.3.

**25** *Port Phillip Gazette*, 20 April 1842, p.2.

**26** Barr.

**27** R.T.M. Pescott, *The Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne: a history from 1845 to 1970*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1982, pp.17-20.

**28** *Port Phillip Gazette and Settler's Journal*, 17 March 1847, p.2.

**29** Weston Bate, *A History of Brighton*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1962, pp.52, 111-112, 331.

**30** *Age*, 9 January 1942, p.6.

**31** Personal communication, Marion McNally (McMillan descendant) 17 April 2016. (La Trobe spelled as Latrobe.)

**32** The Armstrong family; Thomas Armstrong (not related); John and Janet Barr; siblings Francis and Janet Rogerson; and, following the death of John Arthur, his widow Elizabeth and children.

**33** Mick Woiwod, *Kangaroo Ground: the highland take*n, [Yarra Glen, Vic.]: Tarcoola Press, 1994, p.46.

**34** Dianne Reilly (ed.), *Charles Joseph La Trobe: Australian Notes 1839-1854*, Yarra Glen, Vic.: Tarcoola Press, State Library of Victoria and Boz Publishing, 2006. Preface by Bruce Nixon, pp.6-7. (La Trobe's West Indian reports 1837-1838 may be accessed via the La Trobe Society website, Ed.)

**35** History of Kangaroo Ground Presbyterian Church, http://kgpc.pcvic.org.au/history-2.html?showall=&start=1 (accessed 10 March 2018). Dimensions of building given as 30 x 18 feet (9.1 x 5.5 metres).

**36** G. Blackburn, *History of the Yarra Glen District: Yering, Burgoyne-Yarra Glen, Yarra Flats, Tarrawarra, Christmas Hills, Steel's Creek, Dixon's Creek*. Yarra Glen, Vic.: Yarra Glen State School Centenary Committee, 1968, pp.26-27.

**37** Encyclopedia of Yarra Glen and District, http://www.yarraglenhistory.com.au/a-z/Y/yarra-flats-common-school-no956 (accessed 10 March 2018). Dimensions of building, from a letter of 6 October 1868, given as 36 x 18 feet (11 x 5.5 metres),

**38** *Australian Notes*, p.190.

**39** *Argus*, 9 January 1849, p.2. Woodhead was not a David Clark passenger.

**40** *Australian Notes*, p.190.

**41** L.J. Blake (ed.), *Letters of Charles Joseph La Trobe*, Melbourne: Government of Victoria, 1975, p.39.

**42** Beilby was not a *David Clark* passenger.

**43** *Age*, 6 June 1865, p.6.

**44** *Argus*, 19 May 1853, p.9.

**45** *Banner*, 9 May 1854, p.9.

**46** *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 May 1854, p.3.

**47** *Age*, 15 November 1939, p.10.

# From Amiability to Acrimony: William Le Souëf and his relationships with George Augustus Robinson and Charles Joseph La Trobe

## By Professor Ian D. Clark

**Ian D. Clark is Professor of Tourism in the Faculty of Business at Federation University. He has a doctorate in Aboriginal historical geography from Monash University. He has been researching and publishing in Victorian Aboriginal history since 1982. One of his major works is the edited Journals of George Augustus Robinson, Chief Protector, Port Phillip Aboriginal Protectorate, 1 January 1839 – 30 September 1852, in six volumes, later published as a single-volume edition in 2014. This peer-reviewed paper is the first detailed exploration of William Le Souëf and his relationships with both Robinson and La Trobe.**

William Le Souëf[1] was the fifth and final person to be appointed an assistant protector in the Port Phillip Aboriginal Protectorate when he replaced James Dredge in the Goulburn River District in July 1840. Despite some procrastination by Chief Protector, George Augustus Robinson, but with the urging of Superintendent Charles Joseph La Trobe, Le Souëf filled the vacancy created by Dredge's resignation. Yet by the end of the year, those in authority were in agreement that he was unfit for service. This paper is the first detailed exploration of William Le Souëf and his relationships with both Robinson and La Trobe.

### Appointment of William Le Souëf, Assistant Protector, 1840

On 26 March 1840, William and Charles Le Souëf, James Dredge, and the Chief Protector, dined with Superintendent La Trobe, and one topic of conversation was, presumably, the Goulburn Protectorate station.[2] Dredge's resignation on 17 February 1840, as assistant protector responsible for the Goulburn River district of the Port Phillip

Aboriginal Protectorate, had created a vacancy in the Aboriginal department. Le Souëf formally replaced James Dredge on 8 July 1840.[3] At forty-eight years of age, he was the oldest of the assistant protectors, and some four years older than Dredge.[4]

Robinson had been reluctant to appoint Le Souëf, and only did so after La Trobe's intervention.[5] In part his reluctance may be explained by some of the attitudes Le Souef displayed towards Aboriginal people — especially his desire that they be forced to stay in one place and for police to enforce that control and manage them.[6] The view of John Barnes, La Trobe's most recent biographer, is that La Trobe misjudged William Le Souëf, 'very badly', suggesting that 'Le Souef's Huguenot descent and Moravian associations may have initially predisposed La Trobe to favour him'.[7]

According to Robinson's biographer, Vivienne Rae-Ellis, Robinson heartily disliked Le Souëf,[8] and it is fair to say that the antipathy was reciprocated. They were each other's *bête noir*. The following exchange in 1846 is an example of how toxic their relationship became:

'Old Le Souef seeing me come down Bourke Street to my office turned aside and came up the street and meeting me sneered in my face. I looked and scowled as I passed looking him full in the face'.[9]

In October 1840, three months after his appointment, Le Souëf was criticised by the *Port Phillip Gazette* for his mistreatment of some Aboriginal people endeavouring to cross the Yarra River at the Falls. It was an inauspicious beginning for the assistant protector:

> On Saturday last some natives were endeavouring to cross the Yarra Yarra at the Falls, for the purpose of proceeding to their "mia mias", situated above the Brickfields. It so happened that the landing place which they were endeavouring to make, and to which they have been accustomed, has lately been enclosed by Mr Le Soueff [*sic*] for the purpose of a garden, but by what authority the public are wholly unacquainted. It so happened that the father of this gentleman, lately appointed one of the protectors, was taking his accustomed afternoon's promenade in the aforesaid enclosed garden, and observing the approach of these objects of his peculiar charge (an old man and two women with their children on their shoulders) proceeded to the water's edge, armed with a stick, and assisted by some of the men upon the premises, drove these poor creatures away.

> Many persons on this side of the river witnessed this strange conduct, and expressed themselves in no measured terms of indignation and disgust… But there are few instances that we have heard, where the kindly feelings that should govern and guide the protector in his intercourse with the Aborigines, have been sacrificed to personal consideration; and for the honor of the office, as well as for the credit of the Government, we trust that such cases are of rare occurrence.[10]

## Le Souëf's family origins and life in England

William Le Souëf was born 5 January 1792, in London, to parents Jeremiah Le Souëf and Jane Bristow, and was baptised in the Threadneedle Street French Huguenot Church. He married Anna Wales, the daughter of self-taught Scottish-born portrait painter and architectural draughtsman, James Wales, and
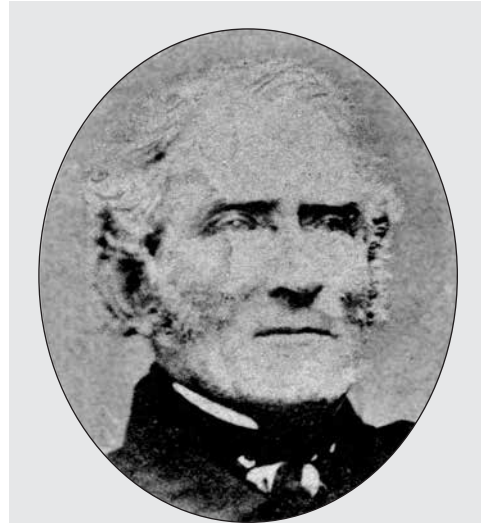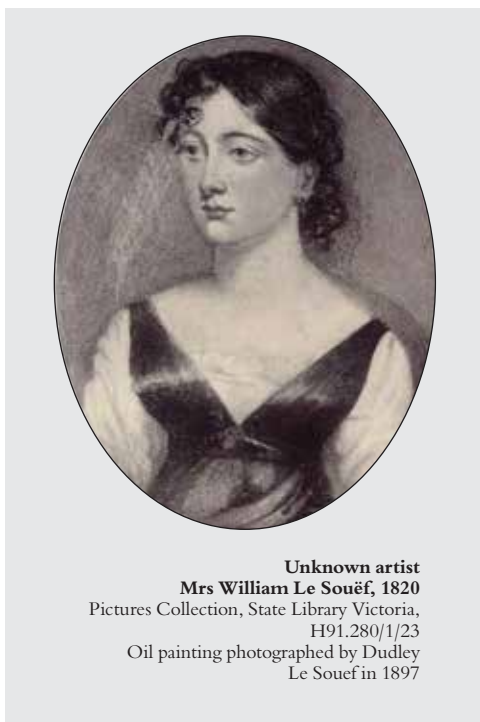


**Thomas Foster Chuck, 1826–1898, photographer**
**William Le Souëf**
Pictures Collection, State Library Victoria, H5056/633, Albumen silver
From The Explorers and Early Colonists of Victoria, compiled 1872

Margaret Wallace, on 8 April 1815 at St George, Bloomsbury.[11] He was descended from an old Huguenot family.[12] Relying on family documents, Alexander Henderson traced the family to Nicholas Le Souëf, born in 1497, who married the granddaughter of one of the Kings of Naples.[13]

Glimpses of William Le Souëf's family's connections and his upbringing can be gleaned from Robinson's journal, for example, on 19 June 1840, Robinson noted 'Mr Le Suef [*sic*] Senior said he knew Lady Franklin from a child, knew her father'.[14] Jane Franklin, née Griffin, was the daughter of John Griffin, a silk weaver, and Mary Guillemard.[15] The Guillemards, Griffins, and Le Souëfs were Huguenots and 'silk men' who traced their roots to Normandy, France.[16] Robinson also noted in his journal in 1843, that the merchant, Alexander Broadfoot 'told me Le Souef had been a *valet de chambre* to an old lord or duke'.[17]

William Le Souëf followed in his father's,[18] and paternal grandfather's,[19] footsteps finding work in the textile industry as a silk broker. For a time was in partnership with James Hebert, his brother-in-law, as 'Hebert and Le Souef', in Norton-Falgate, Middlesex.[20] William is listed in an 1822 directory as a silk broker at Warnford court, Throgmorton Street, London.[21] In September 1837, he appeared before the Insolvent Debtors' Court, in London.[22]

Le Souëf had five children, a daughter, Anna, and four sons, one of whom Frederick

**Unknown artist**
**Mrs William Le Souëf, 1820**
Pictures Collection, State Library Victoria,
H91.280/1/23
Oil painting photographed by Dudley
Le Souef in 1897

William (1817-1820) died in infancy in England. Another son, Charles Henry Bouillard Le Souëf, arrived in Australia in September 1836, with a letter of introduction to Sir Richard Bourke, the Governor of New South Wales.[23] Following the insolvency William followed him in 1838, aged forty-six.[24] His wife Anna and their two youngest sons Dudley and Albert joined him in late September 1840. During 1841 Mrs Le Souëf returned to England on important family business, which is believed to have concerned their daughter Anna.[25] She returned to Melbourne in July 1842, on the *Platina*.[26] Their daughter Anna Pinnock arrived in Melbourne in February 1842. Charles, Dudley, Albert, and Anna were all, at times, associated with the Goulburn Aboriginal Protectorate.

In this early period in Melbourne (1838-1840), Le Souëf lived with his son Charles Henry, who was a tide waiter (inspector) in the Customs department. Their house was *Yarra Yarra*, on the south bank of the Yarra River opposite the Customs House. In 1875, W.F.E. Liardet made a watercolour of the locality, showing the falls on the Yarra River and the Le Souëf house.

### Assistant Protector Le Souëf and the village of 'La Trobe'

Le Souëf began his appointment by reconstituting the Goulburn Protectorate police, and busying himself with establishing the central station (see p.26). His relationship with Aboriginal people, and with his staff, however, soon began to sour. A pattern emerged where the Aboriginal people would only frequent the station when Le Souëf was absent in Melbourne. European staff began to resign or seek transfers to other Protectorate districts. Le Souëf, meanwhile, continued with the construction of his 'grand' house of thirteen rooms and a bathing house.[27]

The relationship between Le Souëf and La Trobe appears to have begun well, although Robinson noted in his journal that La Trobe told him that he 'never knew Le Souef before [he] saw him here, nor Mrs Le Souef'.[28] In an attempt to curry favour with the Superintendent, Le Souëf named the Goulburn River Protectorate Station *La Trobe*, and named two streets, Charles and Sophia, with the forenames of the Superintendent and his wife. Other streets were named for monarchs: George (later Victoria) and Louis-Philip, presumably for Louis-Philippe, the French king who lived in exile in England between 1800 and 1815. With regard to the plain on which the station was situated, Le Souëf had proposed that it be named 'Gipps Plain'.[29]

By April 1841, at least two streets of the village of the central station had been constructed: Charles Street and George Street. In June 1841, Le Souëf sent La Trobe a sketch-plan of the central station. The plan is descriptive, showing fences, roads, avnd the locations of various buildings and gardens. It shows actual structures along with proposed developments. The plan was enclosed in a letter in which Le Souëf was attempting to seek La Trobe's endorsement for promotion to the position of Police Magistrate for the Goulburn District. At best, it represents Le Souëf's intentions for the establishment, a blend of the actual with the intended. At worst, it is a fabrication, an embellishment, a flagrant attempt at flattery and sycophancy, and one that failed to realise its goal — a police magistracy. Bossence's naïve view of the plan is that Le Souef 'respected authority, and admired La Trobe to such an extent that he named the settlement after him'.[30]

The station's name *La Trobe* and its street names do not appear to have prevailed for long. A second name, *Glanavon*, appears in correspondence from Le Souëf, dated 2 and 12 May 1843, in which he gave his address as 'Glanavon, Goulburn River District'.[31] Presumably, Le Souëf had given this name to his home, rather than the station.

### Resignations and withdrawals

Le Souëf seemed willing to threaten La Trobe with his resignation without hesitation. For example, in December 1840, less than six months after Le Souëf had settled into his new

position, La Trobe informed Robinson that Le Souëf had written to him (La Trobe) hoping he would visit the Goulburn station, or he would resign — surely, an act of pettishness. At this La Trobe advised Robinson that he 'never thought Mr Le Souef fit for the duty of an Assistant Protector', a remarkable admission given that La Trobe had been such a strong supporter less than six months earlier.

In January 1841, Le Souëf wrote to La Trobe advising that he intended to resign, once the Chief Protector returned from his proposed tour of the Protectorate's Western district, and asked the Superintendent to recommend him for the position of Police Magistrate for the Goulburn district.[32] This was the position that Le Souëf evidently coveted, indeed his reason for entering the public service in the first place. Le Souëf acknowledged that he 'had every reason to feel deeply indebted to you for the constant support and kindness I have experienced at your hands'. He may have asked La Trobe if he could hold both the police magistrate and assistant protector positions; La Trobe's response was that it could not be.[33] Consequently, Le Souëf withdrew his resignation from the position of assistant protector.[34] Consistent with the other assistant protectors, he was then appointed a territorial magistrate in May 1841.[35] In February 1842 Le Souëf told Robinson that he considered himself a magistrate, and not an assistant protector.

Robinson, Le Souëf and La Trobe met on 1 March 1842 and discussed the situation. The position of police magistrate for the Goulburn district was discussed again with La Trobe later in March 1842. La Trobe and Robinson talked about Le Souëf again on 31 May 1842, when La Trobe told Robinson he 'had better cut the matter short with Mr Le Souef. He had put it in my hands and had partly done it himself'. In correspondence with the Colonial Secretary, concerning Robinson's recommendation that Le Souëf's services be dispensed with, La Trobe noted: 'However inclined to believe that there have been faults on both sides, it is certain that Mr Le Souef has never fully understood his position as Mr Robinson's subordinate. Mr Le Souef deserves succeeding… seems to have great controul [*sic*]. To the performance of other points of his duty as Assistant Protector, he has however, steadily refused attention'.[36]

### Le Souëf's suspension and subsequent dismissal

In February 1843, Le Souëf lobbied La Trobe for the police magistracy for a third time. In his stead at the Goulburn Station, he intended to place his son, Dudley Le Souëf,[37] a plan which Robinson considered 'a farce'.[38] La Trobe's opinion of Le Souëf may be glimpsed in an entry in Robinson's journal: 'La Trobe said Le Souef ought not to have been an assistant protector. Said he knew no more of the blacks than at first'.[39] Robinson had little regard for Le Souëf and his journal entries concerning him, which are overwhelmingly negative, need to be seen in this light. According to Neil Campbell, the Goulburn station's medical officer, 'Le Souef was not fit to
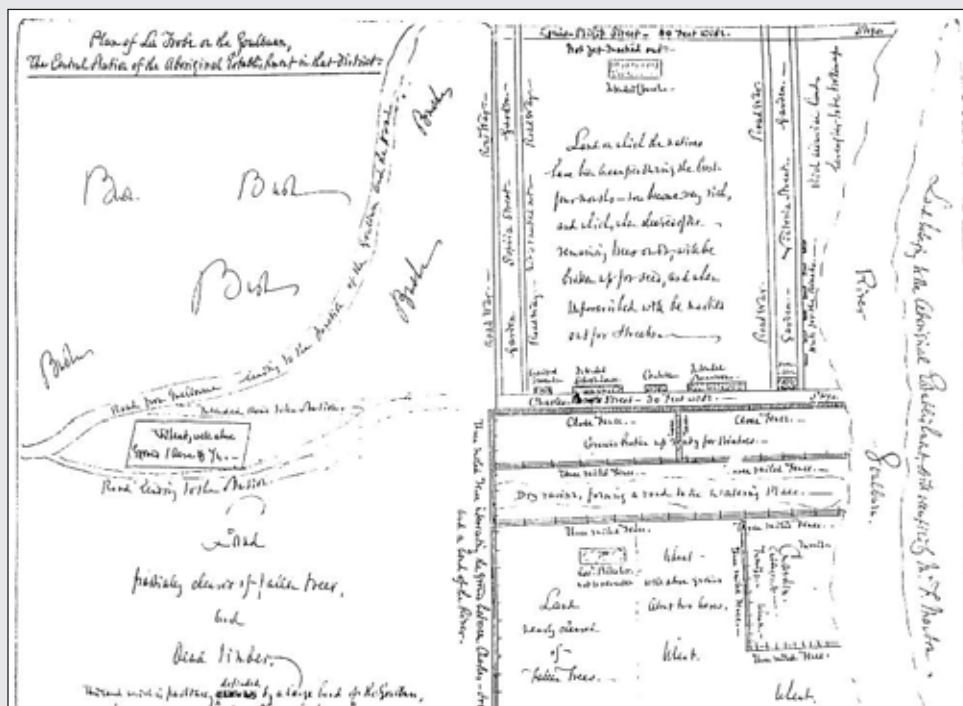
**William Le Souëf,
1792–1862, illustrator
Plan of 'La Trobe' on the Goulburn, 1841**
The Central Station of the Aboriginal
Establishment in that District
(PROV VPRS 6760, Item 12. May be viewed online,
www.latrobesociety.org.au/LaTrobe-sites.html#OtherI)

have charge and at one time he could pronounce him unfit to have charge of his own affairs'.[40]

Le Souëf visited Robinson on 6 June 1843, and Robinson's account of the visit is fascinating. During the meeting, Le Souëf is obsequious, claiming that he respected Robinson, who had his highest esteem. He attempts to manipulate Robinson by offering his wife a pet kangaroo — a diversion that Robinson rejects. Le Souëf ends his conversation admitting that sometimes he speaks with haste, but he means no harm, and that he had the highest opinion of the Chief Protector.[41] In the course of the visit, according to Robinson, Le Souëf stated that he (i.e. Le Souëf) should be the Superintendent of the Port Phillip District, rather than La Trobe. Shortly afterwards Le Souëf was finally stood aside as Assistant Protector.

On the basis of claims made by Robinson, La Trobe instituted a Board of Inquiry into Le Souëf's alleged mismanagement of the Goulburn station. On 30 December 1843, the Board confirmed that Le Souëf had misused his appointment by embezzling funds, stores, and rations, and by using Protectorate servants, equipment and land for his own profit.[42]

## Le Souëf's petitions to the Legislative Council, New South Wales

Le Souëf and his family left the Goulburn station and returned to Melbourne on 16 March 1844.[43] From this time onwards, Le Souëf's relationship with La Trobe took a course that was vitriolic and bitter. In three petitions (1844, 1846, and 1847) to the Legislative Council of New South Wales, Le Souëf sought an inquiry into the circumstances of his dismissal.

In October 1846, Robinson refers to an annual meeting of the Wesleyan Missionary Society held in Exeter Hall in May, where the Rev. Peter La Trobe, Charles' brother who was secretary of the Moravian Missionary Society in the British Isles, addressed the meeting. According to Robinson, Peter La Trobe said that 'Le Souef had drugged' Melbourne.[44] By this, he presumably used the word 'drugged' in the archaic sense of 'nauseated'.

In his third petition Le Souëf made a series of allegations against the management of the Superintendent and accused him of colluding with the Chief Protector to remove him from the office of Assistant Protector. Any obsequiousness and respect shown La Trobe in

1841 had vanished. The focus of Le Souëf's 1847 petition was 'the official misdeeds of Mr Charles Joseph La Trobe'.[45] His charges were that on 10 June 1840, 'several acres of land within the Government Paddock were illegally taken possession of by the afore-said Mr Charles Joseph La Trobe at the upset price; that as Mr. La Trobe was agent or trustee for the Government, he was duty bound to obtain the highest price for the parcel of land in question, a practice from which he never departed when he was not himself the purchaser'. Another charge related to extra-curricular activities of the Superintendent 'reputed to be deeply engaged in sheep and cattle holding and jobbing'. His third charge related to sums of money voted by the Legislative Council for the construction of public edifices and public works, which were diverted from their legitimate purpose by the Superintendent, who, it has been stated, has returned significant sums amounting to £57,074 4 9 to the Treasury in Sydney. Le Souëf sought confirmation from the Council that these sums had been returned to Treasury.

In 1847, in an exchange with La Trobe, in which correspondence from Le Souëf was discussed, Robinson noted that La Trobe told him that he 'never read about Le Souef, he was mad'.[46] La Trobe's way of dealing with Le Souëf during this time appears to have been, simply, to ignore him.

### Public life after service in the Protectorate

Le Souëf is listed in an 1847 directory as a farmer, Merri Creek.[47] According to Robinson, in an oblique entry in his private journal, Le Souëf had asked Robinson and William Thomas for financial assistance in October 1847: 'Old Le Souef turned poor, in great distress, ask I also Thomas'. Given how he felt about him, Le Souëf must have found it difficult to ask for alms from Robinson.[48]

In 1850, William Le Souëf was appointed secretary and manager of the recently formed Victoria Industrial Society, with its office at 73 Flinders Lane, East.[49] The Chair of the committee tasked with codifying the rules of the society was Charles Griffiths, one of the members of the 1843 enquiry into Le Souëf's mismanagement as assistant protector. Le Souëf was one of twenty-two applicants for the secretary's position.[50] Edward Wilson, the editor of the *Argus,* wrote in glowing terms of his appointment: 'In selecting Mr Le Souef, we have reason to believe that the sub-committee have fixed upon a gentleman of great natural ability, of very considerable attainments, of an active and energetic temperament, and of gentlemanly manners'.[51] John Barnes considers his appointment

was clear evidence that Le Souef had 'recovered his reputation'.[52] The society hosted nine annual industrial exhibitions (1851-1859) awarding gold and silver medals to successful competitors exhibiting livestock, agricultural products, animal products, and colonial manufactures.

On Monday 19 January 1852, the *Argus* reported an 'Assault on a Black' in which 'Mary Brown, a decent looking woman' was charged with having assaulted a native constable. The case was remanded till the following week, for the attendance of the 'protector of aborigines'.[53] News that the Protector of Aborigines was going to attend was a red flag to Le Souëf and he sent a missive to the editor of the *Argus* in which he denounced the value of the Native Police Corps and the purported court attendance of the Protector of Aborigines.[54] Le Souëf misinterpreted what is a reference to William Thomas, who was retained as Protector of Aborigines and Guardian when the Aboriginal Protectorate was abolished at the end of 1849.[55] Almost a decade after his dismissal, Le Souëf's bitterness and intense dislike of his former superordinate continued to be a suppurating sore, and he could not resist an opportunity to express his venom.

In April 1852, the *Argus* reported that C.J. La Trobe was to receive the honor of Knighthood from the King of France, and editor Wilson, who was no friend of La Trobe, noted that:

> Mr La Trobe, however, will not be the first resident in this Colony on whom that honor has been conferred, Mr Le Souef having received the honor of Knighthood from the King of France more than twenty years ago, at which period a Foreign creation… conferred on a British Subject, if he chose to claim it (which Mr Le Souef did not) the rank and title of an English Knight Bachelor. On this matter we speak from our own knowledge, having seen on some occasion the original patent in Mr Le Souef's possession and the world will probably anticipate our opinion that the man who declines to bear a well-merited honor is, in reality, in a more dignified position than the man who bears a title of which he is utterly undeserving.[56]

In June 1852 Le Souëf became managing director of a gold escort company, called the 'Melbourne Escort Company' which intended to bring gold from the diggings to Melbourne.[57] The company was dissolved two months after the escort was held up and robbed

**George Alexander Gilbert, 1815–1877, artist**
**Residence of George Augustus Robinson at Prahran on the Yarra, c.1847–48**
Oil on canvas
Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales, ML 307.
Robinson moved here in October 1843 from a cottage beside the Yarra mission establishment

on the track between McIvor (Heathcote) and Kyneton on 20 July 1853, after which numerous creditors went to court to attempt to have their accounts honoured.

As well as managing the Victorian Industrial Society, Le Souëf was active in many causes concerned with animal welfare, ornithology, and zoology. On 3 February 1854, he was appointed 'honorary manager' of the 'Humane Society for the Suppression of Cruelty to Animals' of Melbourne.[58] La Trobe was the president of the society, and Albert Le Souëf was one of the committee members. In October 1857 at a meeting of interested parties to discuss the merits of forming an Ornithological Society in Victoria, Le Souëf raised the possibility of extending the original idea and establishing a Zoological Society, noting that such 'an institution had long been a desideratum in that colony, both for the purposes of science and for that of affording the public the advantage of studying the habits of the animal creation, in properly arranged zoological gardens'.[59]

In 1857 the Victorian Industrial Society made a separate department responsible for the exhibition of livestock and agricultural implements, under the management of William Le Souëf's son, Charles Henry Le Souëf.[60] The Society sought a grant of £1,000 from the government and on 17 November 1858, in the Legislative Assembly of Victoria, Henry Samuel Chapman, the Attorney General, discussed the grant and the Society's rationale for the internal separation. He 'believed that this ingenious scheme was concocted by that peculiarly

minded individual Mr Le Souef' for the purpose of obtaining these funds. He noted that the Industrial Society 'had failed; they had crumbled into dust, and had got into difficulties through their own blunders and mismanagement'.[61] The Attorney General's remarks brought an immediate response from Le Souëf; he believed Chapman's remarks were libellous and cowardly as they were made under the protection of parliamentary privilege. As he could no longer remain on the magistrates roll with Chapman as its head, he tendered his resignation as a territorial magistrate, which was accepted by the Victorian Government.[62] He believed he had discharged his duties without reproach, and had been 'instrumental in suppressing the many acts of brutality which used to disgrace our streets and roads'.[63]

Le Souëf died in June 1862, aged seventy, at Collins Street East, Melbourne.[64] His wife Anna died 8 April 1865 at Crediton, Devon, aged seventy-one.[65]

### The Goulburn Protectorate sans William Le Souëf

With the departure of Le Souëf, the Goulburn protectorate station underwent a rationalisation; Edward Parker, the Assistant Protector at the Loddon district, was given 'surveillance' responsibility of the Goulburn district. The Goulburn and Mount Rouse stations were placed under the daily control of medical dispensers, who were titled 'medical-officers-in-charge'. The Goulburn district saw a succession of medical officers: Neil Campbell,

Dr James Allen, Dr W.B. Atkins, and Dr James Horsburgh. In 1849 the Port Phillip Aboriginal Protectorate was abolished and William Thomas, the Assistant Protector responsible for the Western Port district, was retained as Guardian of Aborigines. The Goulburn station became the responsibility of Crown Land Commissioners, although Horsburgh remained at the station until its closure in November 1853. The Taungurung people, however, continued to camp at the protectorate site, and lived in the protectorate huts whenever they stayed there. A section of the protectorate land became a Police Paddocks Reserve.
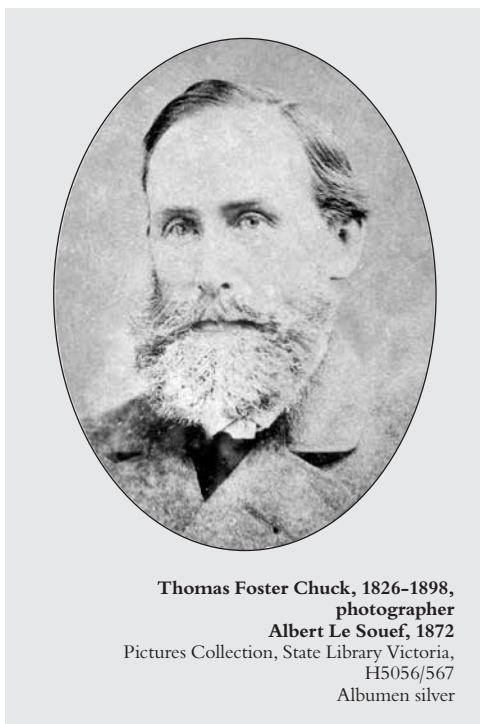
In 1854, the Aboriginal station was surveyed for the township of Murchison. In 1858 some of the Taungurung and Ngurai-illam wurrung left their country and settled at the government refuge at Mount Franklin. In March 1859, a deputation of seven Taungurung visited Charles Duffy, who was Commissioner for Crown Lands and Survey, in Melbourne with a petition for a grant of land near the Goulburn River, where they were willing to locate themselves in permanent settlement and cultivate the land.[66] Their petition was successful and with the assistance of William Thomas, a reserve was selected at Acheron in 1859 under the management of Robert Hickson and his wife Emily (the daughter of Dr John Watton, the late medical-officer-in-charge of the Mount Rouse reserve). After relocating to two sites on the Mohican station, north-west of Cathedral Mountain, in 1863 the Taungurung and Woiwurrung peoples selected a site at Healesville, which became known as the Coranderrk Aboriginal station, under the leadership of John Green.[67]

## Assessments

Michael Christie's assessment of Le Souëf is that he had been poorly chosen; as well as his lack of expertise, his personal failings adversely affected his work and led to friction within the Protectorate.[68] He considered that Le Souëf did not share Dredge's missionary zeal, and saw his job more as that of protecting settler interests than caring for Aboriginal people.[69] Susan Priestley, in her history of South Melbourne, noted that 'William Le Souef was always uneasy in his role of Assistant Protector, his fear giving rise to unwarranted harshness'.[70]

Considering all that has been written about Le Souëf and the views that he committed to paper, it is clear that he was unsuited to the role of Assistant Protector. This is revealed in a collective of statements,[71] gathered by Robinson before and after the appointment: that he would not let the Aboriginal people roam about, but ride after them and stop them; that he would use police force to enforce his wishes; that by using force Aboriginal people were 'easy to manage' — one of his motivations in re-activating the domestic police force that had lapsed under Dredge's tenure; that a good supply of ammunition was essential, as the most efficient way of preserving peace was always to be prepared for war; the report of a station worker that Le Souëf had given him a pistol and

**Thomas Foster Chuck, 1826–1898,
photographer
Albert Le Souef, 1872**
Pictures Collection, State Library Victoria,
H5056/567
Albumen silver

told him to shoot any of the blacks that struck him, lifted their hands, or threatened him with spears; the Le Souëf suggestion that the best way to reduce theft of sheep was to confine Aboriginal people to the station and institute a system of passes to control their movements; that the Aboriginal people should be prevented from carrying Aboriginal 'destructive weapons'; not allowing a member of his staff to investigate an alleged killing of an Aboriginal man and his wife on a neighbouring station; that Le Souëf had reportedly told the people he would give them bullets and gaol, which they dismissed, because 'he talked about muskets, too much muskets'; that he would not let men or women have rations without first working; Dr Baylie's view that Le Souëf may starve the people into work; Le Souëf's response to threats of spearing that it was high time the people were taught that it is incumbent on them to yield obedience to the government which has done so much for them; his labelling of Aboriginal people as 'lawless savages'; that coercion and not persuasion was the only effective way to manage the Aboriginal people.

A settler named Thomson from the Western district of the Protectorate asked Robinson what had Le Souëf 'done with the Goulburn natives to make them hate him. He said he seemed more a terror to them than a protector; they had all left him. He had, he heard, beat a boy and the parents took up their spears and waddies to him. He is a bad man and ought to be dismissed'.[72] Given these attitudes and actions, it is not surprising that the Aboriginal

people began to stay away from the station when he was present. It explains Robinson's reluctance to appoint Le Souëf in the first place, only agreeing after La Trobe's intervention. Lakic and Wrench consider that Le Souëf's obvious dislike and animosity towards people he described as 'lawless savages', and schemes that Robinson considered indicative of a 'mentally infirm mind... most assuredly contributed to the weakening support for and ultimate demise of the Protectorate'.[73]

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that William Le Souëf had a tendency towards superciliousness and arrogance, even lordly pretensions, as seen in his quip that he should have been the Superintendent of the Port Phillip District, and not La Trobe. Some contemporary observers suggested that he suffered from mental illness, with the Goulburn protectorate station's medical officer, Neil Campbell, considering on one occasion that he was 'unfit to have charge of his own affairs'. Behaviour and interpersonal relationships suggest he was a difficult man to get along with — one newspaper editor described him as 'peculiarly minded'. Disputatious, bellicose, and truculent seem to be fitting epithets of his character and personality.

William Le Souëf never achieved the desired social recognition in Victoria — indeed, it was his youngest son, Albert Le Souëf, who was feted in Melbourne's scientific community as an authority on Aboriginal people based on his personal experiences in the Protectorate and the pastoral frontier. Albert joined the Board for the Protection of Aborigines in 1875 and served until his death in 1902, often as Vice-Chairman. During his tenure he was responsible for a policy action that had a profound impact on the Aboriginal people of Victoria, an impact that still reverberates today. The 'Half Caste Act' of 1886, more formally the *Aborigines Protection Act*, legislated that any Aboriginal person of mixed descent under the age of thirty-four, must leave the Aboriginal reserves, 'thus enacting a further and thoroughgoing dislocation of Aboriginal families and culture'.[74] As noted by Edmonds: 'The effects of the Act were devastating. It broke up families and forced many Aboriginal people out of missions, where they eked out a difficult existence on the outskirts of towns among a white population that generally did not accept them'.[75]

William Le Souëf may have been better suited to a different part of the public service where his aggressive behaviour and lack of interpersonal skills would not have been called into play. Perhaps an administrative role would have suited his personality better, given an earlier interest in civil registration. Considering

his statements and those of his superior officers, as well the comments of historians cited here, about attitudes towards and treatment of the Aboriginal people, William Le Souëf's glaring unsuitability for the role of Assistant Protector is starkly obvious.

**Endnotes**

 1 In time, the spelling became 'Le Souef' (pronounced 'Le Swef').

 2 Robinson journal, 26 March 1840, in Ian D. Clark (ed.) *The Journals of George Augustus Robinson, Chief Protector, Port Phillip Aboriginal Protectorate, 1 January 1839-30 September 1852*, USA: Createspace, 2014, single volume edition, p.196; hereafter journal date only will be cited. See also John Barnes, *La Trobe: traveller, writer, governor*, Canberra: Halstead Press, 2017, p.242.

 3 Robinson journal, 8 July 1840.

 4 H.G. Turner, *A History of the Colony of Victoria*, London: Longmans, Green, 1904, Vol. 1, p.230, incorrectly considered Le Souëf was younger than Dredge.

 5 Robinson journal, 19 June 1840.

 6 Robinson journal, 20 June 1840.

 7 Barnes, p.242.

 8 Vivienne Rae-Ellis, *Black Robinson Protector of Aborigines*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1996, p.192.

 9 Robinson journal, 19 October 1846.

10 *Port Phillip Gazette*, 28 October 1840, p.3.

11 England, Select Births and Christenings, 1538-1975; London, Church of England Marriages and Banns, 1754-1921.

12 Paul De Serville, *Port Phillip Gentlemen and Good Society in Melbourne before the Gold Rushes*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1980, p.205.

13 Alexander Henderson, *Henderson's Australian Families: a genealogical and biographical record,* Melbourne: A. Henderson, 1941, pp.370-371. Also see Anecdotal Photographs. No.74. Mr. A.A.C. Le Souef. *Table Talk*, 31 March 1893, p.3.

14 Robinson journal, 19 June 1840.

15 Frances J. Woodward, 'Franklin, Lady Jane (1791–1875)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1966, vol.1, pp.411-412.

16 Ken McGoogan, *Lady Franklin's Revenge: a true story of ambition, obsession and the remaking of Arctic history*, London: Bantam Books, 2007, p.19.

17 Robinson journal, 20 September 1843; and see Rae-Ellis, p.192. I've not been able to confirm this claim.

18 Jeremiah Le Souëf (b. 1760 in London, d. 1842, Islington, England), was a weaver and silk merchant and owned a textile company with the name 'Le Souef & Sons', in Church Street, Spitalfields. *Kent's Directory*, *1803*, London: R. & H. Causton, 1803, p.123.

19 Jean Le Souëf (b. 1710 in Emalleville, Upper Normandy, France, d. 1800, Mile End, London, England), migrated to Spitalfields, London, with a cousin (presumably Jacques Le Souëf) in c.1725, where he married Marie Bouillard (1726-1781), at Cripplegate, London, in 1751.

20 *The European Magazine and London Review*, Vol. 76, 1819, p.377.

21 E. Baines, *History, Directory & Gazetteer, of the County of York; with select lists of the merchants & traders of London, and the principal commercial and manufacturing towns of England*, Leeds: Edward Baines, 1822, p. xvii.

22 Law Notices, *The Times*, 27 September 1837, p.7.

23 Henderson, p.366.

24 Michael Cannon, *Melbourne after the Gold Rush*, Main Ridge: Loch Haven Books, 1993, p.10. Isaac Selby, *The Old Pioneers Memorial History of Melbourne: from the discovery of Port Phillip up to World War I*, Melbourne: The Old Pioneers Memorial Fund, 1924, p.212.

25 A.A.C. Le Souëf Reminiscences 1896: 1. See I.D. Clark and F. Cahir (eds.) *The Children of the Port Phillip Aboriginal Protectorate: an anthology of their reminiscences*, Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2016.

26 Robinson journal, 30 July 1842.

27 See Ian D. Clark, *'Prettily situated' at Mungallook: a history of the Goulburn River Aboriginal Protectorate Station at Murchison, Victoria, 1840-1853*, Ballarat: Ballarat Heritage Services, 2013.

28 Robinson journal, 4 November 1847.

29 PROV Superintendent Port Phillip District, VPRS 10, Inward registered correspondence to the Superintendent... relating to Aboriginal affairs, Unit 2, Item 1840/1335.

30 W.H. Bossence, *Murchison: the J.G. Kenny memorial history*, Melbourne: The Hawthorn Press, Melbourne, 1965, p.50.

31 PROV Superintendent Port Phillip District, VPRS 4398, Unregistered correspondence relating to the dismissal of W. Le Souëf from the Office of Assistant Protector of Aborigines, North Eastern District, Unit I, Items 11, 13.

32 PROV VPRS 10, Unit 3, Letter Registration 1841/45. On this letter is an annotation from La Trobe, dated 23 September 1841, 'Cancelled by W. Le Souëf Senior'.

**33** Robinson journal, 16 January 1841.

**34** In a sense he was pressured to make this determination as Acheson French had applied for the position should it become vacant — see Robinson journal, 11, 12 and 13 January 1841.

**35** *Sydney Gazette,* 15 May 1841.

**36** Dianne Reilly (ed.), *Charles Joseph La Trobe: Australian Notes 1839-1854*, Yarra Glen, Vic.: Tarcoola Press, State Library of Victoria and Boz Publishing, 2006, pp.268-270.

**37** Robinson journal, 1 February 1843.

**38** Robinson journal, 11 February 1843.

**39** Robinson journal, 24 February 1843.

**40** Robinson journal, 30 October 1843.

**41** Robinson journal, 6 June 1843.

**42** PROV VPRS 4398, Unregistered correspondence relating to the dismissal of W. Le Souëf from the Office of Assistant Protector of Aborigines, North Eastern District, Unit I, Items 19, 20, 23, 30, 33.

**43** Robinson journal, 16 March 1844.

**44** Robinson journal, 24 October 1846.

**45** *Argus*, 14 May 1847, p.4.

**46** Robinson journal, 2 September 1847.

**47** J.J. Mouritz, *The Port Phillip Almanac and Directory for 1847*, Melbourne: printed at Port Phillip Patriot Office, 1847.

**48** Robinson journal, 25 October 1847, and see Rae-Ellis, p.192.

**49** Joseph Butterfield, *The Melbourne Commercial, Squatters' and Official Directory for 1854*, Melbourne: J.J. Blundell & Co, 1854, p.144; and see Cannon 1993, p.218.

**50** Garryowen (Edmund Finn), *The Chronicles of Early Melbourne, 1835 to 1852: historical, anecdotal and personal,* Melbourne: Fergusson and Mitchell, 1888, p.432.

**51** 'Victorian Industrial Association', *Argus,* 2 September1850.

**52** Barnes, p.242.

**53** *Argus*, 19 January 1852.

**54** W. Le Souef, 'The Black Police', *Argus*, 21 January 1852, p.2.

**55** Thomas journal, 20 January 1852, in Marguerita. Stephens (ed.), *The Journal of William Thomas: Assistant Protector of the Aborigines of Port Phillip & Guardian of the Aborigines of Victoria, 1839 to 1867*, Melbourne: Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages, 2014, Vol.2, p.515. In his journal Thomas noted that he attended the police office on 20 January 1852 'touching an assault on one of the native police' (Munite), 'as interpreter'.

**56** 'The Knight of Yore and the Knight in Store', *Argus,* 29 April 1852, p.4.

**57** See 'The Gold Escort Company', *Argus,* 11 June 1852, p.2.

**58** *Argus,* 9 September 1939, see also 19 December 1854. In 1859 the Humane Society's offices were at 49 Collins Street west, the same address for the Victoria Industrial Society — see *Tanner's Melbourne Directory for 1859*, Melbourne: John Tanner, 1859, pp.28, 31.

**59** 'Zoological Society of Victoria', *Age*, 7 October 1857, p. 6.

**60** *The Age*, 8 October 1857, p.5.

**61** *The Age*, 18 November 1858. *Bendigo Advertiser* 20 November 1858, p.2, declined to publish the letter as its 'comments are written in too angry a spirit to warrant their insertion'.

**62** *Bendigo Advertiser*, 29 November 1858, p.3.

**63** *Argus*, 19 November 1856; *Age* 19 November 1856.

**64** See Death Notice in *Argus* 19 June 1862, p.4. I have not been able to find any obituaries published in his honour. William Thomas's journal is silent on Le Souëf's death.

**65** A Mrs Le Souëf left Melbourne for England on 4 February 1865: see *Argus* 6 February 1865, p.4. It is possible that this was Anna Le Souëf (ne Wales).

**66** *Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 15 March 1859, p.3.

**67** For a history of Coranderrk station see Diane E. Barwick, *Rebellion at Coranderrk*, Canberra: Aboriginal History Inc., 1998; Ian D. Clark, *The Last Matron of Coranderrk: Natalie Robarts's diary of the final years of Coranderrk Aboriginal Station, 1909-1924*, USA: Createspace, 2016.

**68** Michael Francis Christie, *Aborigines in Colonial Victoria, 1835-86*, Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1979, p.108.

**69** Ibid, p.96.

**70** Susan Priestley, *South Melbourne: a history*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Publishing, 2013.

**71** Robinson journal, entries 1839 to 1847.

**72** Robinson journal, 14 June 1841.

**73** Mira Lakic and Rosemary Wrench (eds.), *Through their Eyes: an historical record of Aboriginal people of Victoria as documented by the officials of the Port Phillip Protectorate, 1839-1841*, Melbourne: Museum of Victoria, 1994, p.22.

**74** Penelope Edmonds, 'The Le Souëf Box: reflections on imperial nostalgia, material culture and exhibitionary practice in colonial Victoria', *Australian Historical Studies*, vol.37, 2006, p.137.

**75** Penelope Edmonds, *Urbanizing Frontiers: indigenous peoples and settlers in 19th century Pacific Rim cities*, Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010, p.234.

# 'A Beautiful Site for a Town': Governor Sir Richard Bourke and the establishment of the Port Phillip settlement 1835-1837

### By Dr Max Waugh

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*'Melbourne is a beautiful site for a town and there will soon be a very pretty one erected'.*[1]

### The Settlement at Port Phillip: John Batman's Treaty

A year before the British Parliament passed the Squatting Act in July 1836, permitting licences over grazing land beyond the officially surveyed areas of New South Wales, settlement at Port Phillip was well underway as people began arriving from Van Diemen's Land. The Henty venture at Portland to the west had started half a year earlier. As early as January 1827 John Batman and a solicitor, Joseph Gellibrand, had written unsuccessfully to Governor Darling from Launceston to be granted permission to run sheep in the Port Phillip District. They were concerned that most of the suitable land in Van Diemen's Land had been taken up, and were looking for new pastures to expand their flocks. Impatient with the seeming inaction of the colonial authorities, Batman and some friends in Launceston, including Gellibrand, had formed the Port Phillip Association early in 1835, and drew up a 'treaty',[2] with which to purchase about 600,000 acres (242,800 hectares) from the Indigenous people occupying land in the area. The land stretched around the bay between what is now Melbourne and Geelong and extended inland from the You Yang Ranges and fifteen miles northwards towards Mount Macedon. On Batman's return to Launceston from his exploratory excursion, Gellibrand drew up a report, in legalistic jargon, to send to Governor Arthur[3] in Hobart, together with a copy of their completed treaty and a map of the territory claimed.

Governor Arthur said he was sympathetic to their cause, and in his reply to Batman

**Unknown artist**
**Governor Richard Bourke, c.1835**
Oil on canvas
Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales,
ML 125

mentioned he had forwarded the report and the accompanying documents to the Home Government. He had also vouched for the respectability of the members of the Association, and its 'humane considerations intended towards the aboriginal inhabitants'. Arthur pretended he was unsure whether Bourke or he had jurisdiction over the Port Phillip area, and asked for clarification from London, making it clear that he was interested in assisting the new settlement, if permitted. Without delay the Port Phillip Association wrote to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, advising that as Port Phillip was much closer to Van Diemen's Land than Sydney, it should come under Governor Arthur's legal domain.[4] To cover himself Arthur waited a month before advising Bourke of the Association's request, hoping that London would place him in charge, even if only temporarily.

The Colonial Secretary, Lord Glenelg, had no difficulty in making a decision on Arthur's request. The stated policy of containment, he said, in January 1836, prohibited schemes for new settlements by private individuals and companies, and he had no intention of departing from it.[5]

In the meantime a furious Governor Bourke had received Governor Arthur's dispatch, annoyed that he hadn't been advised first, and aware of the latter's attempt to undermine his jurisdiction over the new settlement. Without waiting for clarification from London, Bourke immediately issued a proclamation that declared

Batman's Treaty to be null and void, vowing that persons occupying such lands 'will be considered as trespassers' by 'His Majesty's Government'.[6] In Sydney *The Australian* described the document as an 'absurdity' even if the Aboriginal people could grasp such terms as miles and acres.[7] The proclamation was hastily made public in Sydney, Hobart, Launceston and Perth, but not in what became Melbourne until a year later, allowing the new settlers to continue their occupation despite the treaty being declared invalid.[8] Allowing the settlement on the banks of the Yarra River to continue was no doubt a deliberate tactic on Bourke's part, whilst the news of the illegality of their treaty would have certainly been gleaned from Launceston.

Bourke delayed for six weeks before advising the Colonial Secretary in London of his proclamation, knowing full well that in the intervening year awaiting a reply the settlement would continue to expand. In his dispatch he included a plea for recognition of the new settlement to allow the wool industry to continue to support the economy of New South Wales, and besides it was now 'impossible to restrain dispersion' within the set limits. He also took the opportunity to appeal to Glenelg to overturn Lord Aberdeen's previous instruction to disallow the settlement at Twofold Bay, since graziers now opted to transport their wool to Van Diemen's Land in defiance of the ban. Both Port Phillip and Twofold Bay he considered 'ripe for settlement' and to delay official recognition was in his opinion a 'fallacious policy'.[9]

### *Visit by Magistrate George Stewart*

Whilst awaiting Glenelg's response, word was received from John Helder Wedge, formerly an assistant surveyor in Van Diemen's Land and now a Port Phillip resident, that some settlers at Westernport and Portland were shooting Aboriginal people and abducting their women. Wedge claimed that he had personally seen gunshot wounds on six Aboriginal people, one a young girl probably crippled for life.[10] On receipt of this account Bourke promptly sent Magistrate George Stewart and two policemen, in the cutter *Prince George,* to report on the incidents, and to publicise a proclamation warning that the perpetrators of such atrocities would be severely dealt with under the law.[11] Stewart did not visit the sites of the alleged atrocities, because when he arrived he was advised by Wedge that some persons responsible had been killed by 'natives', and another had left the colony. Whilst he did distribute the blankets sent with him, Stewart was advised by some of the 'respectable residents' not to issue the tobacco to Aboriginal people, as they were anxious 'to prevent them acquiring a taste for it or spirits'.[12]

An escaped convict, William Buckley, who had lived amongst the Aboriginal people in the Port Phillip District for the previous thirty years, was of great value to the new settlement as an interpreter, and had recently been given a free pardon by Governor Arthur for his services.[13]

## A Legitimate Settlement

Lord Glenelg's long awaited reply sanctioning Bourke's proclamation and his request to legitimise the new settlements at Port Phillip and Twofold Bay was received on 1 September 1836. Governor Arthur's offer to oversee the settlement was rebuffed by Glenelg, which showed that Bourke's influence and prestige at the Colonial Office in London was considerably higher than his counterpart, especially as it had effected a complete change in the British Government's declared policy of containment.

Glenelg's dispatch also warned that in expanding the territorial limits, care should be taken to ensure that the Aboriginal people were given effective protection and 'their Rights studiously defended'.[14] Several days later Bourke issued proclamations that the Port Phillip and Twofold Bay settlements were now legal, and appointed thirty-six year old Captain William Lonsdale of the 4th Regiment as resident Police Magistrate for Port Phillip.

Lonsdale was chosen by the Governor for his reputation of following orders 'to the letter'

and for his unblemished character and calm temperament.[15] Bourke also lost little time in engaging Captain Hobson of HMS Rattlesnake to transport Lonsdale and his entourage to the fledgling outpost. The brig Stirlingshire was also commissioned to help with the transportation of equipment and stores. Its passengers included a customs officer, his wife and family and an assistant, three surveyors led by Robert Russell, thirty soldiers and an officer, and forty-six convicts.[16] Besides setting up the rudiments of government, Lonsdale was expected to immediately carry out a census of occupants, dwellings, cattle and sheep, and mindful of Glenelg's previous instructions, Bourke charged him with the most important duty of protecting the Aboriginal people 'from any manner of wrong' and winning their favour with kind treatment and presents.

After encountering strong winds along the coast, HMS Rattlesnake entered Port Phillip Bay on 27 September 1836. After a survey of areas around the bay Lonsdale was at first inclined to select Williamstown, initially known as Squatters Point, as the site for the official settlement. That was where the ships began unloading cargo, which was then transported upriver or by land to the banks of the Yarra River.

Lonsdale chose an open space to the west of the settlers' huts for the government compound, and set about erecting the prefabricated buildings brought down from Sydney. These included a temporary cottage for himself and family, a prisoners' barracks, a temporary hospital, military barracks, a commissariat store and an assortment of tiny cottages and tents for government officials.[17] Assistant Surveyor Robert Russell came under criticism from Lonsdale soon after their arrival, when he complained that his two assistants were required to help unload supplies from the ships. Some weeks later Lonsdale observed that his surveyors 'have not displayed much activity', and he had to advise Russell to exert more authority over his assistants.[18] Russell was apt to dispute Lonsdale's authority on a number of occasions, complaining that he was an architect, not a superintendent of convicts.[19]

## Governor Bourke's visit to Port Phillip

Annoyed by the slow progress in surveying the new settlement and the consequent delay in land sales revenue, Bourke decided early in 1837 to make a personal visit to assess the situation for himself. To speed up the process he had requested the Surveyor General, Major Thomas Mitchell, to accompany him, but as Mitchell was about to travel to England to publish a book detailing his explorations in eastern Australia,

Bourke chose surveyor Robert Hoddle instead, intending him to take over from Russell and stay until the task was completed. Hoddle had been surveying in the colony for fourteen years, and had accompanied John Oxley on some of his expeditions.[20]

Captain Hobson prepared *HMS Rattlesnake* for a second journey to Port Phillip. The Governor and his entourage embarked on 24 February 1837, heading south into a fair wind. A 'disagreeable change in the weather' on the fourth day left all of the passengers and many of the crew seasick, but by the time *Rattlesnake* entered Port Phillip Bay on 1 March the winds and weather were ideal. At Point Nepean, the port-side entrance to the heads of the bay, Bourke stepped ashore briefly to determine the best position for a proposed lighthouse to help guide shipping through the dangerous 'rip'.[21] Next day when the ship anchored at the head of the bay, off Gellibrand Point, Captain Lonsdale and his family came aboard to dine. The following day, Bourke and his party finally disembarked and were rowed up the Yarra River to the settlement amongst a flotilla of small boats. They were greeted enthusiastically by the inhabitants, who cheered and fired their guns in salute.[22]

A welcoming address signed by the inhabitants of Port Phillip was delivered to the Governor, expressing gratitude for his part in materially advancing the prosperity of the colony, and 'for having at so early a period visited this newly settled District'. In his reply Bourke thanked them for the warm welcome 'from this promising settlement' and although they were suffering from 'the temporary effects of a dry summer' he had no doubt that the surrounding country would yield 'those lucrative pastoral objects' so successfully delivered in other parts of the colony.[23] John Batman was too ill to join the welcoming party (probably because of his debilitating syphilitic condition),[24] but Bourke rode out 'through a beautiful valley to a station of Mr Batman's and Mr Gellibrand's' two days later.[25]

Tents brought from Sydney were erected for the Governor and his party adjacent to Lonsdale's humble house, and whilst this was being done the Governor, Hoddle, Russell and the other surveyors rode off to inspect the proposed boundaries of the town. Drawing from his own specialist experience in surveying, map making and advance scouting with the British army,[26] Bourke no doubt felt in his element in lively discussions with the survey team. He approved the Yarra site and named it Melbourne, in honour of the current British Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne. It had been rumoured that the town was to be called Glenelg after the Secretary of State for the Colonies, but recently Bourke had a public falling out with Glenelg (over a dispute with his friend the Colonial Treasurer,

**Joseph Anderson Panton, 1831–1913, artist**
**Phillip Parker King, 1791–1856, artist**
**Government residence Melbourne 1837 (1880)**
Oil on canvas
Pictures Collection, State Library Victoria, H86.27
This painting, commissioned by the family of Phillip Parker King in 1880, based on his sketch of 1837, depicts Captain William Lonsdale's residence and government office, a wattle and daub hut located on Batman's Hill near the present-day corner of Bourke and Spencer streets. Descending the hill, with tents in the background, is Governor Bourke and his aide. On the left may be seen John Batman, Captain Hobson and William Buckley, and to the right of the house Captain Lonsdale.

Campbell Riddell), hence the name change. Bourke named the nearby port William's Town after King William IV, and Hobson's Bay in appreciation of the captain of *HMS Rattlesnake.* Asked to report on the previous work of Robert Russell and his colleagues, Hoddle confirmed how little had been achieved. Apart from a feature plan of the existing settlement, a map of Port Phillip and Hobson's Bays, and a ninety-three mile survey of the western shoreline with no plan, little had been done,[27] and only a few town streets had been pegged out.

It is widely accepted that Bourke chose all the names of Melbourne's main streets, dictating them to Hoddle.[28] Starting with those running north-south, the main track leading up from the Yarra Yarra River he named King and William Streets after the King, William IV, and the next eastwards he named Queen Street, after his wife Queen Adelaide. Elizabeth Street was named in memory of Bourke's late wife; Swanson Street after Captain Charles Swanson, banker and chairman of the Port Phillip Association; Russell Street after Lord John Russell, Secretary of State; Stephen Street (renamed Exhibition Street in the 1880s after the Exhibition Building was built) after James Stephen, Under-Secretary of State; Spring Street, after his friend Thomas Spring-

Rice, the Whig Member for Limerick. In the east-west direction, the first from the Yarra was called Flinders Street after the explorer Matthew Flinders, Collins Street for the commander of the short-lived Sorrento Bay settlement, Bourke Street to mark his own contribution, and Lonsdale Street for the administrator, Captain William Lonsdale.[29] In a letter to his son Richard, the Governor had confessed he took delight in giving some 'Whig names' to the streets, and in declaring 'Melbourne is a beautiful site for a town and there will soon be a very pretty one erected'.[30]

Hoddle accepted the Governor's naming the streets, but disagreed with him on their proposed width. Bourke preferred sixty-six feet (twenty metres) as in Sydney, but Hoddle insisted they needed to be wider at ninety-nine feet (thirty metres) to better accommodate the traffic. In addition, Bourke liked the idea of a system of lanes parallel with the main streets, thirty-three feet (ten metres) in width, allowing stabling and outbuilding access, whereas Hoddle saw no need for them. After discussion a compromise was reached, whereby the two men agreed the streets be constructed at the wider measurement of ninety-nine feet and narrower lanes could be included, running east-west

**Robert Russell, 1808–1900, artist**
**Melbourne from the Falls, 1837**
Pencil and opaque white on buff paper
Pictures Collection, State Library Victoria, H38129

between them, hence Flinders Lane and all the 'Little' Streets (names given by Lonsdale after Bourke had departed).[31] Hoddle later regretted he had compromised on the lanes, because they subsequently become streets of squalid little houses and shops.[32]

### Bourke's overland tour of the Port Phillip District

Anxious to explore more of the countryside, Bourke and his entourage set out on horseback for Geelong on 9 March, travelling only eight miles before having to repair an overturned wagon, and spending the night there.[33] Crossing the Werribee River the next day he noted in his journal that the flat countryside was parched and burnt by the sun — there was no water except for the river, the soil of poor quality with 'grass hardly of the value of that on Goulburn Plains'.[34] Reaching Little River well before noon the party marvelled at the mountain of Vilumanata (later called the You Yangs) about five miles in the distance.[35] Arriving in Geelong late in the afternoon, the party rode around Corio Bay towards Point Henry and up the Barwon River to Fisher's station. Back in Geelong they received a welcome address from the white inhabitants, and before journeying up the Moorabool River to visit three more stations, Bourke commented on the fine green valleys and pastures on the slopes of the Barrabool Hills.

Leaving Geelong on 16 March, Bourke's party journeyed back the twenty-one miles to Werribee before making camp. Next day they crossed the ford at the river and headed northwards in the direction of Mount Macedon, through a chain of ponds to Mount Cottrell, then on to stay overnight at the station of William Sams,[36] one of the fifteen investors in the Port Phillip Association pastoral company.[37] Bourke found the country around Mount Macedon good for sheep and cattle grazing, and after calling at another station in the foothills near Gisborne, they were escorted in the climb by the owner, John Aitken. As the party ascended the mountain to a height of 1,500 feet (457 metres) they found the going difficult: 'underwood, shrubs, fallen trees, and loose stones adding to the difficulty of the steepness of the mountain's side'. Because of the denseness of the trees at the summit, particularly the mountain ash, it was difficult to obtain a proper view of the surrounding countryside; however they were able to verify some of the landmarks in the distance previously noted by Major Mitchell. They descended the mountain carefully and spent another night at Aitken's station before heading towards Melbourne via the valley of Gellibrand's Creek and the Geelong Road, covering a distance of thirty miles in the process.[38]

### Back in Melbourne

The following day Bourke held further discussions with Hoddle on the layout of the township of Melbourne, crossed over the Yarra to the east side of Hobson's Bay and found the land between the river and the sea covered in saltmarsh, and not suitable for cultivation or grazing.[39] Bourke also directed Hoddle to survey the peninsula of Point Gellibrand in order for land to be selected there for government reserves.[40]
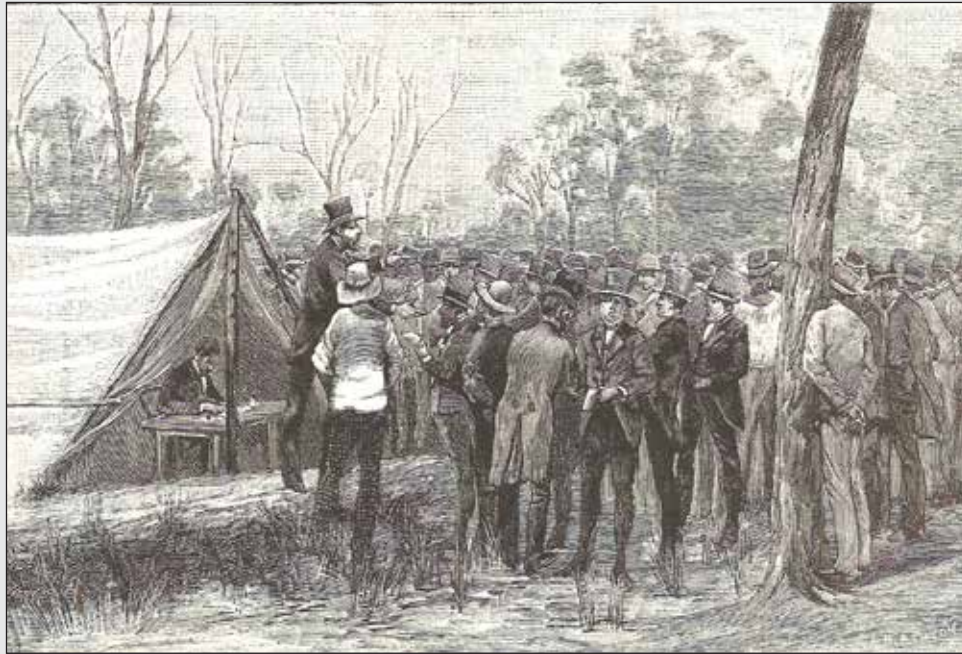
**Julian Rossi Ashton, 1851–1942, engraver**
**First land sale at Melbourne, 1st June 1837**
Wood engraving
Victoria and its Metropolis: Past and Present
(Melbourne, McCarron & Bird, 1888, Vol.1, p.155)

Bourke and Hoddle discussed the conditions for the prospective first land sale in the settlement. The original plan of Melbourne contained twenty-four rectangular blocks of ten acres (four hectares) each, each block split into half-acre allotments. The first land auction was arranged for 1 June 1837, when one hundred of these allotments were up for sale. Conditions for sale were a starting bid (upset price) of £5, a ten percent deposit with the balance payable in one month, the erection of a minimum £50 dwelling within twelve months of purchase, and carriageways to each dwelling to be via the lanes only.[41] Hoddle was to return to Sydney with Bourke, prepare the necessary documentation for the land sales, and be back in Melbourne in time for the first auction. Bourke had already aborted a previous plan to conduct the sales in Sydney, after receiving a deputation of Melbourne residents complaining about the expense and inconvenience of getting there in time.[42] Besides, the Port Phillip settlers were fearful that wealthy northern counterparts would easily outbid them.

The Governor's last day in Melbourne was spent riding north-east along the Yarra River, through heavily wooded country sixteen miles to Plenty Creek, where 'deep ravines and water bubbled over ledges of rock' and there was an abundance of fish in 'very good quality water', causing Bourke to reflect that the Yarra was 'perhaps the finest river I have seen in New South Wales'.[43]

## The return to Sydney

On 29 March Bourke and his party boarded the *Rattlesnake* for an uneventful return voyage. The ship's gunnery officer Lieutenant John Norcock, who had observed Bourke closely on board ship, curtly noted in his diary near the end of the voyage: 'I had a long chat with the Governor, who is an affable and gentlemanly man — but he is an Irishman — and I don't like Irishmen generally'.[44] On 8 April the ship finally arrived in Sydney on 'a cold, rainy and disagreeable day', after an absence of thirty days. As the Governor disembarked he was greeted with the usual pomp and circumstance from the harbour wharf.

## Melbourne land sales 1837

Melbourne's first land sales went ahead as planned on 1 June 1837, with Hoddle himself acting as auctioneer, using a fallen log as his rostrum.[45] About 150 prospective buyers assembled and all 100 allotments were sold to sixty-six buyers. Land prices averaged £38 per lot, with the lowest being £18 (between Elizabeth and Swanston streets) and the highest of £95 (a corner of William and Collins streets).[46] Two other smaller auctions were held to complete the sale of land in the township

initially surveyed by Hoddle. The second was in Melbourne on 1 November 1837, and the third on 13 September 1838, in Sydney.[47]

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Bourke had already resigned from the governorship when he travelled to Melbourne, and he left the colony on 1 December 1837 following the appointment of his successor Sir George Gipps.[48] The permanence of his legacy in planning and naming in Melbourne, outlined in this article, is quite striking; the county of Bourke is also named for him.

### Endnotes

**1** Bourke to his son Richard, 14 April 1837, Bourke Papers, State Library of New South Wales, Vol.6, p.37.

**2** The word was first used as part of a legal phrase 'treaty, bargain, or contract' in a proclamation by Governor Bourke declaring the document 'null and void' — see endnote 5.

**3** Lieutenant-Governor George Arthur, Governor of Van Diemen's Land 1824-1836 (A.G.L. Shaw, 'Arthur, Sir George, baronet (1784-1854)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography,* Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1966, Vol.1, pp.32-38).

**4** Roy Bridges, *One Hundred Years: the romance of the Victorian people*, Melbourne: Herald & Weekly Times, 1934, pp.148-149.

**5** Ibid, p.150.

**6** Richard Bourke, Proclamation 26 August 1835, Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales, (*New South Wales Government Gazette*, 2 September 1835, p.613, reproduced *Historical Records of Victoria,* Vol.1, *Beginnings of Permanent Government*, [hereafter *HRV1*], ed. by Pauline Jones, Melbourne: Victorian Government Printing Office, 1981, p.13).

**7** *The Australian,* 14 June 1836, p.3.

**8** Rex Harcourt, *Southern Invasion, Northern Conquest: story of the founding of Melbourne,* Blackburn South, Vic.: Golden Point Press, 2001, p.103.

**9** Bourke to Glenelg, October 10, 1835, *Historical Records of Australia*, series 1, vol.18, pp.153-158.

**10** *HRV*1, p.33.

**11** Richard Bourke, Proclamation 3 May 1836', *New South Wales Government Gazette*, 18 May 1836, p.395 and 25 May 1836, p.405.

**12** *HRV1,* p.40.

**13** *The Australian,* 14 June 1836, p.3.

**14** Glenelg to Bourke, April 13, 1836, *Historical Records of Australia,* series 1, vol.18, pp.379-381.

**15** Garryowen (Edmund Finn), *The Chronicles of Early Melbourne 1835 to 1852: historical, anecdotal and personal,* Melbourne: Fergusson and Mitchell, 1888, Vol.1, p.39.

**16** *HRV1*, p.156.

**17** George Tibbits and Angela Roennfeldt. *Port Phillip Colonial 1801-1851: early government buildings and surveys in Victoria*, Clifton Hill, Vic.: Port Phillip Colonial, 1989, p.13.

**18** Lonsdale to Bourke, 8 December 1836, *HRV1*, pp.85-86.

**19** See Fay Woodhouse, 'Power, Politics and Passion: Port Phillip before the gold rush', *La Trobeana*, v.16, no.2, July 2017, pp.12-21, 'Surveying the Landscape: Robert Russell, Robert Hoddle and the first plan of Melbourne', *La Trobeana*, v.16, no.3, November 2017, pp.6-14, and Patricia Hawkins, *Robert Russell: artist of Early Melbourne*, ed. by Fay Woodhouse, Lancefield, Vic: Hindsight Consulting, 2017.

**20** *Historical Records of Victoria,* Vol.5, *Surveyors' problems and achievements, 1836-1839* (hereafter *HRV5*), ed. by Michael Cannon and Ian MacFarlane, Melbourne: Victorian Government Printing Office, 1988, pp.34-35.

**21** Journal of Commander Norcock, *HRV1*, pp.92-93.

**22** Ibid, p.93.

**23** *New South Wales Government Gazette*, 12 April, 1837, p.295.

**24** P.L Brown, 'Batman, John (1801–1839)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography,* Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1966, Vol.1, p.70.

**25** Journal of Sir Richard Bourke, 7 March 1837, Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library Victoria, MS 5176, copy MS 6941. (Journal for 1 to 29 March reproduced *VHR1*, pp.100-107).

**26** Max Waugh, *Forgotten Hero: Richard Bourke, Irish-born Governor of New South Wales, 1831-1837*, Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2005. pp. 5-8.

**27** *HRV5*, p.35.

**28** *Historical Records of Victoria,* Vol.3, *The early development of Melbourne* (hereafter *HRV3*), ed. by Michael Cannon and Ian MacFarlane, Melbourne: Victorian Government Printing Office, 1984, p.37.

**29** Ibid, p.39

**30** Bourke to Richard Bourke, 14 April 1837.

**31** *HRV3,* pp.38–39.

**32** Garryowen, p.14.

**33** Bourke's journal, 9 March 1837.

**34** Ibid, 10 March 1837.

**35** Diary of Captain Phillip Parker King, 13 March 1837, *HRV1*, p.107.

**36** Bourke's journal, 18 March 1837.

**37** 'Sams, William Gardner (1792–1871)', John T. Spurway, *Australian Biographical and Genealogical Record*, Sydney: A.B.G.R. in association with the Society of Australian Genealogists, 1992, pp.370–371.

**38** Bourke's journal, 21 March 1837.

**39** Ibid, 22 March 1837.

**40** Martin Sullivan, *Men and Women of Port Phillip*, Sydney: Hale and Iremonger, 1985, p.25.

**41** C.D. Riddell, Colonial Treasurer, to William Lonsdale, April 1937, *HRV3*, p.80.

**42** A.G.L. Shaw, *A History of the Port Phillip District: Victoria before Separation*. Melbourne: The Miegunyah Press, 1996, p.71.

**43** Bourke's journal, 28 March 1837.

**44** Journal of Commander Norcock, 2 April 1837*, HRV1*, p.98.

**45** Harcourt, p.112.

**46** Shaw, p.71.

**47** *HRV3*, pp.119–122, 124–127.

**48** Hazel King, 'Bourke, Sir Richard (1777–1855)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography,* Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1966, Vol.1, pp.128–133.

# The La Trobe Golden Testimonial

## By Susan Priestley

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In the November 2011 issue of *La Trobeana*, Andrew McIntosh wrote of the valedictory testimonial that accompanied a 'superb vase... of native gold, manufactured by native talent', which was presented to Lieutenant-Governor La Trobe during a Melbourne ball and supper held on a warm gusty evening, 28 December 1853.[1] An account detailing the presentation with an accompanying engraving appeared in the *Illustrated London News* of 17 June 1854, six months later.[2] By then the newly widowed La Trobe was about to arrive in England after a swift ten-week passage via the Panama route,[3] anxious to rejoin his children who were with his Swiss in-law family at Neuchâtel. The subsequent fate of the presentation vase or cup was unknown in 2011, although it was noted that a silver and glass candelabrum centrepiece, purchased in London with the remaining testimonial funds, has been in the collection of the National Gallery of Victoria since 1986.

John Barnes in his 2017 biography chose to confine comment on the farewell presentation to La Trobe's gratified response that the testimonial was assurance that 'the colonists of Victoria hold that I have not betrayed the trust reposed in me, and that I have always had the good of the colony at heart'.[4] Nevertheless, something more can be gleaned of the background to the event, how it was organised, details about the cup and the full testimonial speech given by the Speaker

of the Legislative Council, James Palmer. Many of these details do not come from Victoria's major newspaper of the period, the *Argus*, which was so virulently disdainful of the Lieutenant-Governor, but from other colonial papers and, in particular, a short-lived Melbourne journal *The Banner*. The latter was started by Hugh McColl in October 1853 with production taken over by editors George Black and Henry Thomas Holyoake in December, the time-span during which the presentation was arranged and accomplished. Advertising and news items about the testimonial seem to have been of mutual benefit to organisers and infant paper alike.[5] All three *Banner* men were relatively recent immigrants, with McColl going on to lasting fame as a Victorian politician and promoter of irrigation.[6] The historical record concerning editors Black and Holyoake, on the other hand, focuses on their Chartist background and participation at Eureka in 1854, twelve months later.[7] But there is little doubt that at least one, and perhaps all three men, wrote the *Banner* reports in December 1853.

A preliminary meeting about the testimonial was held on Friday 9 December[8] at the vast new 'Horse Repository' in Lonsdale Street, east of Swanston Street, which was the planned venue of the valedictory ball since it could accommodate the numbers expected to attend. The meeting was chaired by the mayor of Melbourne, John Thomas Smith, who earned

**Samuel Thomas Gill, 1818–1880, artist**
**J. S. Campbell & Co, lithographers**
**Tattersalls horse bazaar Melbourne, John Black Proprietor, 1853**
Lithograph with tintstone
Pictures Collection, State Library Victoria, H18109
Although intended for a horse and carriage bazaar, the building instead had a
rapid turnover of theatre, circus and hotel occupants over the following decades

the soubriquet 'Whittington of the South' by being elected mayor seven times between 1851 and 1864.[9] Sydney-born Smith had come to Melbourne in 1837, briefly taking the position of assistant teacher at the Aboriginal mission station on the south bank of the Yarra, before finding a niche in the nascent commerce of Melbourne as storekeeper for John Hodgson. After his marriage in April 1839 to Ellen, daughter of publican Michael Pender, he built his fortune as landowner, licensed publican and theatre owner.[10] Elected a Melbourne city councillor in December 1842, Smith retained the seat until his death in 1879, while his parliamentary career after 1851 was just as enduring, except for a single defeat in 1856. His political life aroused the particular antagonism of Lauchlan Mackinnon and Edward Wilson from 1848, and was doubly focussed after 1852 when Mackinnon became joint proprietor of the *Argus*.[11] The journalistic arrival of *The Banner* in 1853 thus provided a fresh and relatively unbiased promotional opportunity for councillor and parliamentarian Smith, among others.

Prior to organisation for the testimonial ball, Lieutenant-Governor La Trobe had accepted the mayor's invitation to two functions,

a dinner for 'the old colonists of Victoria' at the Criterion Hotel on 14 September, and the mayoral ball held in Smith's Queens Theatre on 26 October. At the dinner, following dutiful toasts to the Queen and Prince Albert, Smith proposed the toast to the Lieutenant Governor:

> He was sure that... if they had met His Excellency more frequently they would have felt that delightful pleasure that they now experienced (hear, hear) as well as the respect they owed him as a representative of Her Majesty. (Cheers)... [And they] would have a better understanding than they might have in the past [of the] Government of the Colony.

The toast was drunk with the band playing 'For he's a jolly good fellow'. Perhaps solaced by acknowledgment of previous misunderstanding of his role, La Trobe replied that he 'felt assured... [by] the good feelings and good wishes... and if at any time his services were looked upon as having been useful, he should feel gratified, and at all times should be proud in being... remembered as "an old colonist" '. After four more toasts and responses given in long speeches, the dinner

**Samuel Calvert, 1828–1913, engraver**
**John Thomas Smith, Esq., MLA, 1863**
Wood engraving
Pictures Collection, State Library Victoria, IAN
25/03/63/1
Published in The Australian News for Home Readers

degenerated into 'great disorder' occasioned by those 'too devoted in their homage to the shrine of Bacchus', with matters made worse by police attempts at control. La Trobe and his party felt at liberty to depart some time before order was restored and the toasts resumed.[12]

The mayoral fancy dress ball, attended by 'several hundred ladies and gentlemen... the mayors of Geelong and Hobart Town... several members of the Legislative Council, a large number of military officers, and many of the merchants and citizens of Melbourne', was altogether more decorous. 'The music was executed by Moore's quadrille band and the band of the 99th regiment. Refreshments of the most recherché description were provided by Mr Moss of the Criterion Hotel'.[13]

## The Farewell Ball

The swell of goodwill evident at these occasions would seem to have prompted the idea of a farewell testimonial, which was arranged in less than three weeks. At the initial meeting on 9 December, Legislative Councillors John Goodman[14] and Augustus Greeves[15] were prominent in putting forward conditions for the fund and its presentation. It was agreed that James Palmer, Speaker of the Legislative Council,[16] would make the presentation; individual subscriptions were to be limited to £5; the testimonial was to be worth not less than £1,000; any fund surplus would 'be appropriated to the purchase of a service of Plate for His Excellency

in England'.[17] A fifty-five-strong committee of management was appointed, all of whom would accept subscriptions and provide gentlemen's tickets to the ball at £3 10s each. James Fraser as honorary secretary would send invitations to those ladies associated with ticket-holders whose names and addresses were provided to him at 69 Collins Street West, which was in the heart of the city's financial district.[18]

Heading the committee list was the Speaker of the Legislative Council followed by the Mayor of Melbourne, who by then was John Hodgson.[19] The list continued with the consuls of Prussia, United States of America, Belgium, France, Portugal and Holland (consular agent), indicative of the immigrant communities and trade links already established in goldrush Victoria. Among the forty-seven other committee men, who were personally named and mostly old colonists, were fourteen Legislative Councillors, former and future parliamentarians, Justices of the Peace Robert A. Balbirnie and James Smith, professionals like barrister R.D. Ireland,[20] and the then editor/ proprietor of the *Melbourne Herald* George Cavenagh,[21] as well as prosperous businessmen like David Benjamin who was to have a significant role in the later history of the presentation cup. Since it is known that the testimonial fund yielded more than the minimum £1,000 target, it would appear that each committee man gathered in at least four £5 subscribers or their equivalent with smaller amounts. The estimate of people attending the ball was 'nearly 2,000', a number for which the contractor had catered but he later contested the amount paid to him, insisting he was about £1,800 out of pocket, because of late alterations to what had been agreed in the contract. He chose to proceed in court against George Cavenagh as 'one of the most active promoters of the affair', although the action was unsuccessful.[22] That was one small indication that neither the *Herald* proprietor nor its readers in general shared the *Argus* sentiment about La Trobe. It was then revealed that tickets sold, entitling entry for a gentlemen and two ladies, totalled less than 500, so the attendance figure may have been some hundreds lower than 2,000. A less honourable suggestion was that some of the committee and/or subscribers had not put in extra money for a ticket.[23] Nevertheless, the ball was an impressive gathering of colonists, more representative than later generations reading the *Argus* reports may have been willing to credit.

Accounts in the *Banner* and the *Geelong Advertiser*[24] begin with the transformation of the 'matter-of-fact' building into a 'truly magnificent' ballroom with a capacious supper room adjoining. The long dancing hall had an orchestral gallery at the north end, and at the

other a raised dais furnished with a vice-regal chair and the gold cup on a pedestal. The room was illuminated with nearly 2,000 lights that were 'skilfully arranged' among 'arabesque... hangings of every pleasing hue'. The lion and unicorn insignia, flags and ensigns are also visible in the *Illustrated London News* picture.

## The Presentation

A strong southerly buster just as the Lieutenant–Governor arrived about 9.30pm blew clouds of dust into the room and extinguished most of the candles, but once relit 'dancing proceeded briskly up to the hour of presentation', which was just on midnight. James Palmer in his Speaker's robes delivered the address:

> Sir, I have been commissioned by my fellow-colonists to present you with this vase which now lies before me, which is composed of native gold and has been manufactured by native talent. I trust that Your Excellency will accept this token of the esteem of your fellow colonists in the spirit in which it is offered — as a frank and free acknowledgement of the unexampled prosperity which they have enjoyed under your government during the last fourteen years.
>
> It would ill become me, Sir, under present circumstances, to pronounce an eulogium on your character, nor would it, I am sure, be agreeable to you that I should do so; but, assembled as we are to do honour to your name, I may be permitted to assure you that your character is held in high esteem by a large bulk of your fellow colonists, and that it is this sentiment alone which prompts them on the present occasion to perpetrate their regard in the manner which they now propose.
>
> We wish, Sir, that when you leave these shores you should carry with you some tangible and decisive proof of the affections of those for whom you have laboured and among whom you have lived for so many years.
>
> We wish that, when in some distant land, you shall hereafter hear of the fame of our advancing prosperity, you may be able with honest pride to identify yourself with the movement, that your warmest and best sympathies may be extended towards us, and that you will be justified in saying to those around you that under Divine Providence you have been a principal instrument in inaugurating the destinies of a great colony. We wish, Sir, that in all the time to come, however beset you may be with difficulties, however harassed by misrepresentation, you may feel assured that the public judgment possesses an instinctive tendency to rectify itself, and is essentially just in the long run; that however the obloquy of certain sets and motives of public men are ultimately fairly weighed and as justly estimated, and that though the reward of virtue be deferred, it is not on that account the less certain.
>
> We wish, Sir, that on festive occasions in future years, when your children and your children's children shall produce this vase, they may feel a strong incentive to virtue, both public and private, arising out of the history of this family possession, under the fullest persuasion that such rewards are not offered where they are not deserved.
>
> In the name, therefore, of my fellow colonists, I present you with this vase. I fill it, sir, with their good wishes, even to overflowing. I will only add our united hope that you may live many years, and that honour, peace, and happiness may attend them.[25]

La Trobe was plainly affected, acknowledging that he was: 'quite bewildered by the exciting scene around me, and want words to express my sense of the goodness of which you are disposed to make me the object'. Hearing of the 'unexampled prosperity... enjoyed under your government' was an acknowledgement of his steady prudent style. A particularly welcome balm would have been the apology, inherent in the third last paragraph, for the public vilification received through the *Argus* and its followers. Supporting him on the dais with the Speaker

were Colonial Secretary J.L.F. Foster, Justice Redmond Barry, Collector of Customs H.C.E. Childers, Mayor John Hodgson, MLCs Greeves, Goodman, Cavenagh, Joseph Anderson, Francis Murphy, and others embraced by '&c'.

## The Cup and its Fate

A description of the presentation cup, as published in *The Banner*, is of interest since some details were not included in the McIntosh article. It weighed 170 ounces with an octagon base six
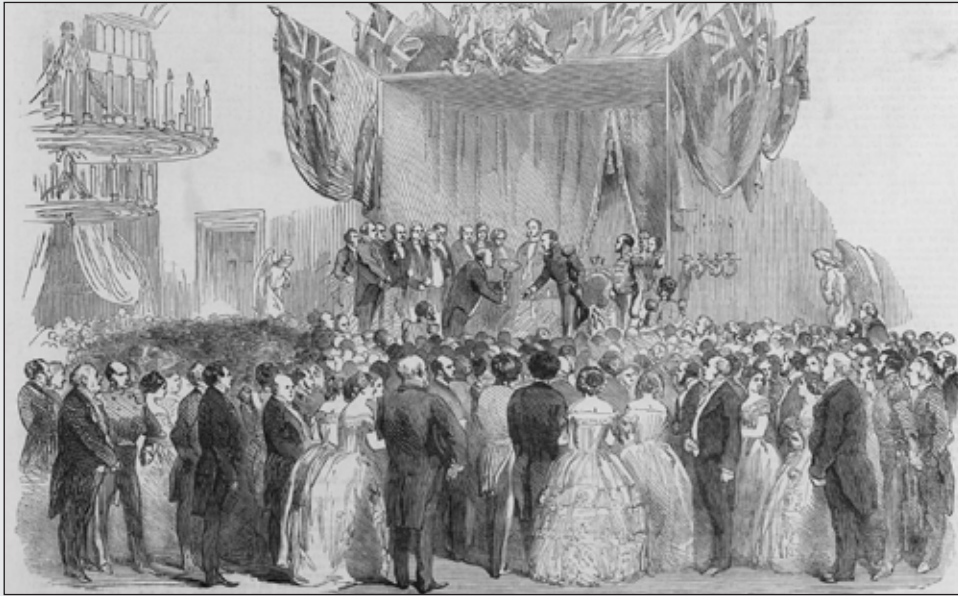
inches in diameter and was sixteen inches high. Engraved on one side of the base were the arms of the colony, and on the other the inscription:

> Presented to His Excellency Charles Joseph La Trobe Esq. the first Lieutenant-Governor of Victoria in consideration of the high esteem in which he is held by his fellow-colonists, and of the signal success which, under Divine Providence, has attended his administration of the Government of the Colony, during fourteen years.[26]

Rising from the globular centre of the base was a ten-inch high decorated column, one and a half inches in diameter, in burnished gold, 'its capital resolving itself into a laurel wreath... [with] the cup surmounting the whole'. The cup was oval in shape, three and a half inches deep, nine inches wide, with fluted edges, and capable of holding a bottle and a half of wine. Grouped around the base of the column were figures in 'dead' and partly burnished gold, each weighing about six ounces. Set among 'a sprinkling of nuggets' were a gold digger with pick, spade and 'little black pipe', a gold-washing cradle, an 'aboriginal chief with his spear in true fighting attitude', an emu, a kangaroo and a sheep. There is surprisingly contemporary resonance in that the only two humans depicted were the chief 'in true fighting attitude' rather than vanquished, and the digger who came to symbolise democratic Australia. Pastoralists were symbolised by the

sheep, and townspeople not at all, while the emu and kangaroo had long been unique Australian symbols, originally used in 1806 by Hawkesbury River settlers on what is now known as the Bowman Flag, and then on various Advance Australia arms displayed at international exhibitions.[27] By way of comparison, the base of the candelabrum centrepiece has three standing figures, emblematic of an Aboriginal person, a goldminer and a shepherd.

Makers of the cup were 'Messrs Bond and Tofield, working jewellers, 19 La Trobe Street East' on commission from jeweller Henry Drew 'of 78 Collins Street East near the Mechanics Institution', the present Athenaeum. It is known that Bond and Tofield made at least three other gold cups or vases in 1853, one of which was displayed at the Victorian Industrial Exhibition in November, a month before the La Trobe testimonial.[28] Despite the boast about native talent, two and probably all three jewellers were recent immigrants from Britain, and all were gone from Melbourne a few years later.

Three months after the testimonial ball, Henry Drew was credited with making a 'very handsome gold cup... from a design of Mr Harris', the Samuel Henry Harris who was among English migrants forming Melbourne's original Jewish community.[29] Weighing twenty-three ounces and priced at £200, the cup was inscribed: 'Presented to David Benjamin, Esq., by his co-religionists of Melbourne, on the eve
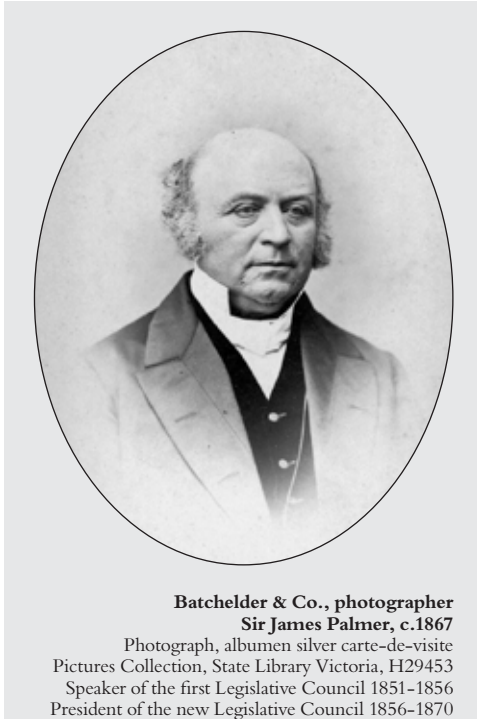
of his departure from the Colony, as a mark of esteem for his valuable services'. The inscription on the front was matched on the other side by a bas relief of the recently-opened new synagogue in Bourke Street west, where Benjamin was recognised for his foundational work. Two solid gold figures on the cup's pedestal represented a veiled Moses with the Ten Commandments, and a robed Aaron with 'the rod that budded in one hand, and the incense in the other'.[30] The cup was presented to David Benjamin on the eve of his departure from Melbourne after nearly sixteen years. He and his family were on the new clipper *Prince Alfred* that sailed for London on 30 March 1854, five weeks before La Trobe's departure. Since the latter travelled by the Panama route which involved two transhipments, it is just possible that Benjamin travelling direct to London may have transported both his and La Trobe's presentations, securely packaged by jeweller Drew.

Eight years later David Benjamin was responsible for entering the La Trobe cup in the Victorian section of the International Exhibition of 1862, which was staged in a vast new building constructed in the Royal Botanical Gardens at South Kensington, and now the site of London's Natural History and Science Museums. In October and November 1861 the items collected in Victoria had been displayed in Melbourne's original exhibition building erected in 1854 on what became the Mint site in William Street.[31] Those deemed of sufficient quality were then shipped to London in January 1862 for the exhibition that opened in May and ran for seven

months. There were 542 items in the Victorian collection which was located centrally among the Australian colonies on the western side of the northeast transept, well lit by the adjacent eastern dome.[32]

The fact that the cup and a gold brooch entered by David Benjamin were together numbered 542 is an indication of their late entry and London location; neither were in the 1861 showing at Melbourne. Confirmation of this appeared in the jury reports, extracts from which, together with 'other information taken from official sources', were published 'under the directions of the Commissioners for promoting the Intercolonial Exhibition of Australasia to be held in Melbourne, 1866'.[33] Under Class XXXIII, Works in Precious Metals and Their Imitations and Jewellery, medals were awarded in 1862 to Julius Hogarth of New South Wales who became a renowned Sydney jeweller,[34] and to Governor Sir John Young for his encouragement of the industry, with the comment, 'The emu and kangaroo in Australian gold are truthfully modelled and carefully chased'. A special note was added regarding two exhibits from Victoria in 1862:

> [T]he Jury regret that on the occasion of their visit the arrangement of the Victorian Exhibition was not perfected, or they would have made awards for No.542, a gold cup, by D. Benjamin, of Melbourne [*sic*], presented to C.J. La Trobe, Esq., the first Lieutenant-Governor of the colony... [on which] the figures of colonists and natives are characteristically modelled... [and for 403, gold inkstand on granite pedestal] presented to J.V.A. Bruce, Esq., the contractor of the Melbourne and Murray River railway, by the workmen employed by him.

What happened to the gold cup once the exhibition closed at the end of 1862 is unknown. Part of the Victorian exhibit went on to a Dublin exhibition in 1863, but there is no record of the cup's inclusion. One possible, perhaps even likely, interpretation of the many gaps in evidence is that La Trobe was compelled by financial stringency to dispose of the cup, probably through David Benjamin, a well-connected wealthy gentleman of Westbourne Terrace, Hyde Park,[35] whose discretion La Trobe could trust. As John Barnes records, in 1862 the former Lieutenant-Governor was still enduring the protracted wait for the government pension that was his due; in addition, worrying symptoms of sight loss had appeared.[36] The cup's inscription would have been removed before sale, if the whole was not destined to be melted down.
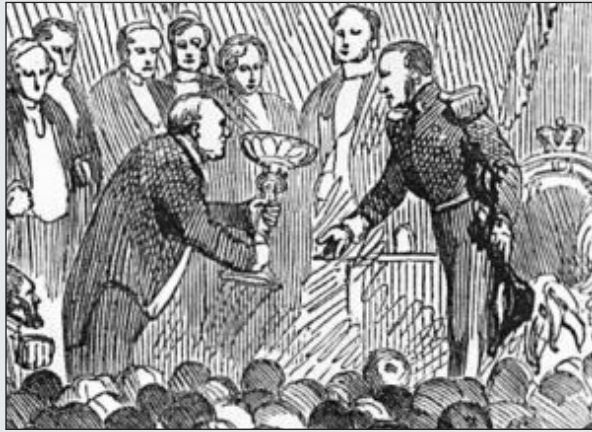
**Unknown engraver**
**Presentation of a golden
cup at Melbourne
to the Lieutenant-Governor
of Victoria (detail)**
Wood engraving
The Illustrated London News,
17 June 1854, p.575.
Detail courtesy Ian McIntosh.
The cup weighed 170 ounces
(4.82 kg) and was 16 inches
(40.5 cm) high.

At least the family made use of the silver candelabrum until after La Trobe's death in December 1875. When the National Gallery of Victoria purchased it in 1986, it came from an 'aristocratic' collection assembled in the mid-1870s, suggesting purchase at that time when reduced family circumstances had forced its sale. The provenance of a silver presentation vase made in England in 1864, now in the collection of the Queensland Art Gallery, is less well defined, but again it was probably kept in the family until at least 1875.[37] Another twenty-two written testimonials and addresses sent to La Trobe acknowledging his service are held in State Library Victoria.[38]

The inscription on the golden testimonial cup telling of 'high esteem' and 'signal success' is an echo of the Speaker's address at the presentation ball. That lends a certain poignancy to La Trobe's recommendation for Palmer, as President of the Legislative Council in Victoria's new bicameral system, to receive the knighthood that was bestowed in July 1857. He described Palmer as a 'gentleman by birth, education and profession. Sometimes he pulled against, more often for, but I always respected him as honest'.[39] It epitomises the sober balance in La Trobe's judgement of people, a quality not always earning due reward in his lifetime, but contributing substantially to his permanent legacy. Similarly, knowing the full history of the valedictory presentation in December 1853 brings new facets to the legacy, all the richer for being fashioned from 'native gold'.

**Endnotes**

**1** Andrew McIntosh, 'La Trobe's Golden Testimonial', *La Trobeana*, vol.10, no.3, November 2011, pp.48–49. See also 'So where is that enormous vice-regal gold vase?', http://museumandhistory.com/tag/vase (accessed 21 February 2018). In newspapers, both 'cup' and 'vase' were used as descriptions of the testimonial.

**2** *Illustrated London News*, 17 June 1854, pp.575–576, Gale Document Number HN 3100036872.

**3** *Times* (London), 18 July 1854, p.12, 'Australia', Gale Document Number: CS201493234, cited in Susan Priestley, 'The La Trobe Dairy Farms', *La Trobeana,* vol.15, no.2, July 2016, pp.36–42.

**4** John Barnes, *La Trobe: traveller writer governor*, Braddon, ACT: Halstead Press in association with State Library Victoria and La Trobe University, 2017, p.320.

**5** Thomas A. Darragh, *Printer and Newspaper Registration in Victoria, 1838-1924*, Wellington NZ: Elibank Press, 1997.

**6** Valerie Yule, 'McColl, Hugh (1813–1885)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, Vol. 5, 1974, pp.131–132.

**7** Justin Corfield, Dorothy Wickham, Clare Gervasoni, *The Eureka Encyclopedia*, Ballarat: Ballarat Heritage Services, 2004, pp.57–58, 274.

**8** Fullest account in *Geelong Advertiser and Intelligencer*, 13 December 1853, p.4.

**9** Jill Eastwood, 'Smith, John Thomas (1816–1879)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, Vol. 6, 1976, pp.150–151.

**10** *Historical Records of Victoria,* Vol.2A, *The Aborigines of Port Phillip 1835-1839,* Editor: Michael Cannon, Melbourne: Victorian Government Printing Office, 1982, p.206; Vol.3, *The Early Development of Melbourne*, 1984, pp.89, 595.

**11** Geoffrey Serle, 'Wilson, Edward (1813–1878)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, Vol. 6, 1976, pp.412–415; Jacqueline Templeton, 'Mackinnon, Lauchlan (1817-1888)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. 5, 1974, pp.177–178.

**12** Press reports including *Argus*, 15 September 1853, p.5, although Smith not mentioned by name, only by title.

**13** *Argus*, 27 October 1853, p.5; on the same page of the 28 October issue, an alphabetical list of guests and their costume characters appeared.

14 John Goodman 1826-1874, Parliament of Victoria, Re-member (Former members) database: https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/index.php?option=com_fabrik&view=list&listid=23&Itemid=1135.

15 R.W.G. Willis, 'Greeves, Augustus Frederick Adolphus (1805-1874)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, Vol. 4, 1972, pp.292-293.

16 Alan Gross, 'Palmer, Sir James Frederick (1803-1871)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, Vol. 5, 1974, pp.392-393.

17 *Geelong Advertiser and Intelligencer*, 13 December 1853, p.4; also reported in *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 December 1853, p.4 and *Courier*, Hobart, 15 December 1853, p.2.

18 Advertisement in *The Banner*, 23 December 1853, p.15, 27 December, p.11; Portugal is named twice in the consular list, one with the title Consul General a likely error for Prussia.

19 John Hodgson (1799-1860), Parliament of Victoria, Re-Member (Former members) database: https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/about/people-in-parliament/re-member/details/24/696.

20 Janice Burns Woods, 'Ireland, Richard Davies (1815-1817)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, Vol. 4, 1972, pp.460-461.

21 Marjorie J. Tipping, 'Cavenagh, George (1808-1869)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, Vol. 1, 1966, pp.216-217.

22 *Banner*, 17 January 1854, p.10; *Argus*, 16 January 1854, p.5.

23 *Argus*, 12 May 1854, p.4; letter from 'Homo', 19 May, p.5.

24 *Banner*, 30 December 1853, p.7; *Geelong Advertiser and Intelligencer*, 31 December 1853, p.4. The presentation address and La Trobe's response also in *Argus*, 30 December 1853, p.5 (illegible in Trove), and *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 January 1854, p.2; cup description also in *Illustrated Sydney News*, 7 January 1854, p.5.

25 Ibid.

26 This form of words appears in the *Banner, Argus, Sydney Morning Herald* and *Illustrated Sydney News*.

27 Melissa Harper and Richard White (eds), *Symbols of Australia*, Sydney: University of New South Wales Press and Canberra: National Museum of Australia Press, 2010, pp.107-109.

28 Hawkins, John, 'Australian Goldsmiths' Work, 1834-1950', *The World of Antiques & Art,* issue 60, December 2000–June 2001, p.15.

29 Hilary L. Rubinstein, *The Jews in Victoria, 1835-1985*, Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1986, pp.4-9.

30 Item from the *Argus* in *Tasmanian Colonist,* Hobart, 3 April 1854, p.3.

31 *Catalogue of the Victorian Exhibition 1861, with prefatory essays*, Melbourne: Government Printer, 1861. Included in SLV digitised Intercolonial and International Exhibitions collection: https://guides.slv.vic.gov.au/interexhibhttps://guides.slv.vic.gov.au/interexhib.

32 *International Exhibition 1862: Official Catalogue of the Industrial Department*, 3rd edition, London: Truscott, Son & Simmons, 1862 (September), pp.140-148.

33 *The Australasian Colonies at the International Exhibition, London 1862*, Melbourne: Government Printer, 1865, p.90 *inter alia*.

34 John Wade, 'Hogarth, Julius (1820-1879)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography, Supplement 1580-1980,* Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2005, pp.183-184.

35 He died there aged 77 in June 1893, 'deeply beloved and sincerely mourned', prescribing in his will that the gold cup presented to him in 1854 become a family 'Heirloom'.

36 Barnes, pp.336-341.

37 Cooke, Glenn R, 'A Presentation Vase: research report', *La Trobeana*, v.9, no.2, July 2010, pp.25-27; 'Marks on Hunt and Roskell's "Presentation vase" 1864', https://blog.qagoma.qld.gov.au/marks-on-hunt-and-roskell%e2%80%99s-presentation-vase (accessed 25 February 2018).

38 Charles Joseph La Trobe collection of illuminated addresses, 1851-1854, Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library Victoria, MS 10106.

39 Cited in Alan Gross, 'Palmer, Sir James Frederick (1803-1871)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, Vol. 5, 1974, pp.392-393.

# Kingsborough's 'Antiquities of Mexico': some notes on Australian-held sets

### By Wallace Kirsop

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Sylvia Whitmore's paper 'Charles La Trobe, Lord Kingsborough and the nine magnificent volumes of the *Antiquities of Mexico*'[1] invites, by implication at least, some brief complementary notes on the copies of this massive work held in Australian libraries. More than one of these is mentioned in Dr Whitmore's article, but it is useful to make the record as comprehensive as possible. In the long run one hopes that someone will attempt a census and a bibliographical history of one of the nineteenth century's most extravagant publishing enterprises. In the meantime Randa Marhenke's online notes[2] are the most recent account of the complexities of what was produced. With thirty-one sets recorded for North America in the *National Union Catalog of pre-1956 Imprints* it is certainly not a rare work. Size and cost help to explain this, so it is perhaps not so surprising that Australian holdings are, all in all, quite respectable. The lower prices payable by the 1870s, as attested in Bohn's edition of Lowndes' *Bibliographer's Manual*,[3] are also part of the story.

It seems that the earliest reference to a possible Australian purchase occurs in the minutes of a special meeting of the Library Committee of the Legislative Assembly of the Victorian Parliament on 18 June 1860:

> It being represented to the Committee that the Trustees of the Public Library were desirious [*sic*] of receiving into their collection Lord Kingsborough, Works on the Antiquities of Mexico, and the Committee feeling, that it might properly be placed in the Public Library. Ordered that if the Work should be applied for it might be sold to the Public Library for the sum of £52-10.[4]

In the event nothing seems to have happened in that year, and there is no corresponding mention in the minutes of the Trustees of the Public Library.[5] What is certain is that Kingsborough's *Antiquities of Mexico* was acquired for the Parliament some time between

**The first page of Codex Mendoza (detail) Facsimile, Antiquities of Mexico, Volume 1, 1831**
From copy held by State Library Victoria

the printing of the Library's first catalogue in 1867 and the appearance of a supplement in 1871.[6] The early volumes in the set[7] are dated 1830, which means that Agostino Aglio rather than Kingsborough himself is credited on the title-pages for the production. The plates are coloured, and all volumes are bound in the half-morocco style that was probably determined by the publishers. A small oval ticket of the London bookseller Pickering inside the upper board of Volume I is the only clue to the set's provenance.

The Melbourne Public Library, as it was still called, did not buy Kingsborough till 6 December 1879 and then from Quaritch of London for £50.[8] The binding is similar to that in the Parliament's set, and the plates — liberally stamped in the Library's style of the period — are again coloured. The main difference is the 1831 date on the title-pages with due credit given to Kingsborough.[9]

The University of Sydney Library owned a set by the time its printed catalogue was published in 1892.[10] The volumes are of the 1830 issue — without Kingsborough's name on the title-pages — and the plates are coloured.[11] The bindings match those in Melbourne, and in Volume I at least there is a stamp 'BOUND BY J. WRIGHT'.[12] No further information is visible concerning the provenance, and it has to

be stated that few Australian institutions match the record-keeping of State Library Victoria.

The Free Public Library in Sydney possessed the *Antiquities of Mexico* by 1876.[13] The issue is 1831, and the plates are not coloured. However, there is the standard half-morocco binding on volumes that were generously stamped by the institution, the only visible owner.[14] It is perhaps significant that, when the Library Association of Australasia held a Loan Exhibition in the Great Hall of the University of Sydney in October 1898,[15] the University Library's coloured set of Kingsborough was shown in preference to the set from the Public Library.

In the twentieth century the State Library of New South Wales (formerly the Public Library) came to own a second set of Kingsborough, one carrying the bookplate of David Scott Mitchell.[16] Technically, in the absence of any signature by Mitchell himself, the provenance could be considered suspect.[17] None the less, given the non-Australian subject, I am inclined to think Mitchell was the purchaser of volumes few people would have dared defile with a manuscript signature. No other signs of provenance are visible in this example of the 1831 issue with uncoloured plates.

One possible source for Mitchell's copy was the auction of John Macgregor's collection in Melbourne following his death in 1884. Macgregor, the most substantial Victorian bibliophile of the nineteenth century,[18] owned Kingsborough in a set whose description corresponds to Mitchell's: 1831 issue, half-morocco binding, no mention of coloured plates.[19] Unusually, the *Argus* devoted a long editorial commentary to the sale, mentioning Kingsborough amongst other outstanding items.[20] Macgregor seems never to have put an ownership mark in his books, and no known documentation survives of his dealings with booksellers, especially Quaritch, of whom he was a very good customer. Apart from books given away in the lifetime of the solicitor and former parliamentarian Macgregor, or purchased by the Melbourne Public Library at the 1884 auction, we are left with many mysteries, including the ultimate fate of his *Antiquities of Mexico*, an undoubted prize, certainly, in a library estimated to hold 10,000 volumes. There are similar gaps in our knowledge of Mitchell's collecting, so it is fitting that these notes should end with a guess and with a puzzle.

Enigmas apart, it is fair to add, as Sylvia Whitmore has suggested to me, that the two Melbourne institutions made no secret of their ownership of Kingsborough. The *Antiquities of Mexico* were retained by the Parliamentary Library while much other material was dispersed, notably to State Library Victoria and Monash University Library, over the last sixty years. The splendid volumes are displayed to visitors, as I discovered when I accompanied a French librarian to Parliament House in 2010. The State Library has been more discreet, perhaps because its treasures are so numerous. None the less, one Kingsborough volume was included in the exhibition held in 1906 to celebrate the Library's golden jubilee.[21]

**Endnotes**

**1** Sylvia Whitmore, 'Charles La Trobe, Lord Kingsborough and the nine magnificent volumes of the *Antiquities of Mexico'*, *La Trobeana*, vol.16, no.3, November 2017, pp. 39-46.

**2** *FAMSI*, Randa Marhenke, October 2011. Last Revised May 2013. 'The Aglio-Kingsborough Paris Codex', http://www.famsi.org/mayawriting/codices/pdf/Aglio-KingsboroughParisCodex.pdf, pp.1–9 (accessed 15 March 2018).

**3** William Thomas Lowndes, *The Bibliographer's Manual of English Literature*, new edition by Henry G. Bohn, London: George Bell & Sons, 1871, II, p. 1276.

**4** For access to this document and to other material I am much indebted to Sarah Edwards of the Victorian Parliamentary Library.

**5** Trustees of the Public Library, Gallery and Museum, Minutes, vol. 13a, MSF 12855.

**6** *Supplementary Catalogue of the Library of the Parliament of Victoria*, Melbourne: John Ferres, Government Printer, 1871, p.64: 'DUPAIX (M.). Antiquities of Mexico. Illustrated by Lord Kingsborough. 9 vols. fol. London, 1830-48.'

**7** Call number: E/913.72/ANT.

**8** VSL: Stock Book J–M 1866–1881, opening 83. I thank Kevin Molloy for making this record available to me.

**9** VSL: RARES EF/913.72/AG5.

**10** *Catalogue of Books in the Library of the University of Sydney*, Sydney: W. E. Smith, 1892, p.219: 'Kingsborough (Edward, Lord): Antiquities of Mexico. (Coloured Plates). 9 vols. Fol. Lond. 1830-48'.

**11** University of Sydney Library (Fisher Library): 4730.13/Folio E1.

**12** See Charles Ramsden, *London Bookbinders 1780–1840,* London: B. T. Batsford, 1956, p.154.

**13** *Catalogue of the Free Public Library Sydney 1876. Reference Department*, Sydney: Thomas Richards, Government Printer, 1878, p.258.

**14** State Library of New South Wales: RB/RX972.01/1-9.

**15** Library Association of Australasia, *Proceedings of the Sydney Meeting, October 1898: Guide to the Loan Exhibition*, Sydney: [Hennessy, Campbell & Co.], 1898, p.37, no.618.

**16** NSL/Mitchell: DSM/X571.7/1 SET.

**17** See Elizabeth Ellis, 'David Scott Mitchell: a life and a bequest' in *A Grand Obsession: the D S Mitchell story*, Sydney: State Library of New South Wales, 2007, pp.18-19.

**18** See Wallace Kirsop, '"The Finest Private Library in Australia": John Macgregor's collection', *The La Trobe Journal*, no. 69, Autumn 2002, pp.30–38.

**19** *Catalogue of the Library of the late Hon. James [sic] Macgregor*, Melbourne: Gemmell, Tuckett & Co., 1884, p.124, no.1631.

**20** 'The Library of the Late Hon. J. Macgregor', *Argus*, 12 August 1884, p.6,

**21** *Catalogue of the Exhibition of Old, Rare, and Curious Books, Manuscripts, Autographs, etc., held in Commemoration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Opening of the Public Library of Victoria*, Melbourne: Robert S. Brain, Government Printer, 1906, p.30, no.174.

**Heritage apples,
Ribston Pippin, 2018**

**Sandi Pullman
with Victorian Community
History Award, Historical
Interpretation Award, 2014**

**Helen Botham (L) farewelling
Governor Linda Dessau AC,
14 December 2017**

# La Trobe's Cottage report

Sunday openings continued to be well attended and it is now possible for people to have a group tour of the cottage and award-winning garden on any day of the week throughout the year — bookings through the National Trust. Two weddings took place in the garden over the summer period and in each the wedding parties and the guests said that the Cottage garden provided an excellent wedding venue.

Sadly, our dedicated Garden Coordinator, Sandi Pullman, is not continuing her long-standing contribution to the garden (the management of which is now under the direction of the National Trust's Horticulture team). Over a period of seven years, Sandi led the work to transform the garden area into the style La Trobe had, featuring many of the plants that he grew. She also sourced plants of interest including a collection of 'latrobei' species, and initiated many garden projects, including most recently the art exhibition held in conjunction with the Melbourne Society of Women Painters and Sculptors. Sandi's knowledge, resourcefulness and enthusiasm will be sorely missed.

The Governor made two visits to the Cottage at the end of the year in connection with a filming project. She was assisted by Helen Botham during her second working visit. The National Trust launched its revised Reconciliation Action Plan in the garden, in fine mild conditions in March, the launch having been postponed from early December due to severe threatening weather conditions.

Two dining chairs said to have been in *Jolimont* during La Trobe's time there have been donated to the National Trust for display in the cottage. Researching their provenance and recommending appropriate re-upholstery will be one of the tasks Deakin University Cultural Heritage students will undertake in a project of making recommendations for improving the preservation and interpretation of the Cottage collection.

We look forward to seeing members in the series of events being held in Mueller Hall in coming months and at our Garden Day on Sunday 7 October that opens the summer season.

**Cottage Management Team**

# Forthcoming events

## JULY

**Sunday 8**
> **Members Talk to Members
> and Friends★**
> **Time:** 2.30–4.00 pm
> **Speaker:** Davydd Shaw
> **Topic:** Edward Byam Wight:
> enterprising pioneer in the
> Port Phillip District

## AUGUST

**Wednesday 1**
> **La Trobe Society
> Annual General Meeting and Dinner**
> **Time:** 6.30 pm
> **Venue:** Lyceum Club, Ridgway Place,
> Melbourne
> **Guest Speaker:** Dr Monique Webber
> **Topic:** La Trobe's Garden City and the
> Lost Sculptures of Fitzroy Gardens
> **Invitations will be sent to members**

**Sunday 12**
> **Members Talk to Members
> and Friends★**
> **Time:** 2.30–4.00 pm
> **Speaker:** Peter Hiscock AM
> **Topic:** La Trobe and his Horses –
> Testing Times

## SEPTEMBER

**Sunday 9**
> **Members Talk to Members
> and Friends★**
> **Time:** 2.30–4.00 pm
> **Speaker:** Irene Kearsey
> **Topic:** Gulf Station: one of the National
> Trust's La Trobe-era properties

**Tuesday 18**
> **Friends of La Trobe's Cottage
> Annual Lecture**
> **Time:** 6.00-8.00pm
> **Venue:** Mueller Hall, National
> Herbarium, Royal Botanic Gardens
> **Speaker:** Lorraine Finlay
> **Topic:** Eliza Nelson and Dr John
> Singleton: eventful lives in colonial
> Victoria
> **Refreshments**
> **Admission:** $25
> **Bookings essential**
> **Invitations will be sent closer to
> the time**

## NOVEMBER

**Friday 16**
> **Festive Cocktails**
> **Time:** 6.30-8.30pm
> **Venue:** Toorak House (Swedish
> Church), 21 St Georges Road, Toorak
> **Guest Speaker:** Dr Robert La Nauze
> **Topic:** Made to Order for Government
> House: the art of colonial cabinet-makers
> George Thwaites and Sons
> **Refreshments**
> **Bookings essential**
> **Invitations will be sent closer to
> the time**

## DECEMBER

**Sunday 2**
> **Anniversary of the
> Death of C J La Trobe
> Sunday Service**
> **Time:** 11.00 am
> **Venue:** St Peter's Eastern Hill,
> 15 Gisborne Street, Melbourne
> **Refreshments**
> **No Charge**
> **Venue:** St Peter's Eastern Hill.

**★Members Talk to Members and Friends**
> **Venue:** Mueller Hall, National
> Herbarium, Royal Botanic Gardens
> **Refreshments:** afternoon tea will
> be served
> **Admission:** $5, payable at the door
> **Bookings essential:** by the previous
> Wednesday, please email
> talks@latrobesociety.org.au,
> or phone 9592 5616 (leaving a message)
> **Note:** Allow ample time to park.

# Back Issues

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
They may be searched by keyword.

# Contributions welcome

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

**Further information about the Journal may be found on the inside front cover and at** 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

"Qui la cerca, la trova"