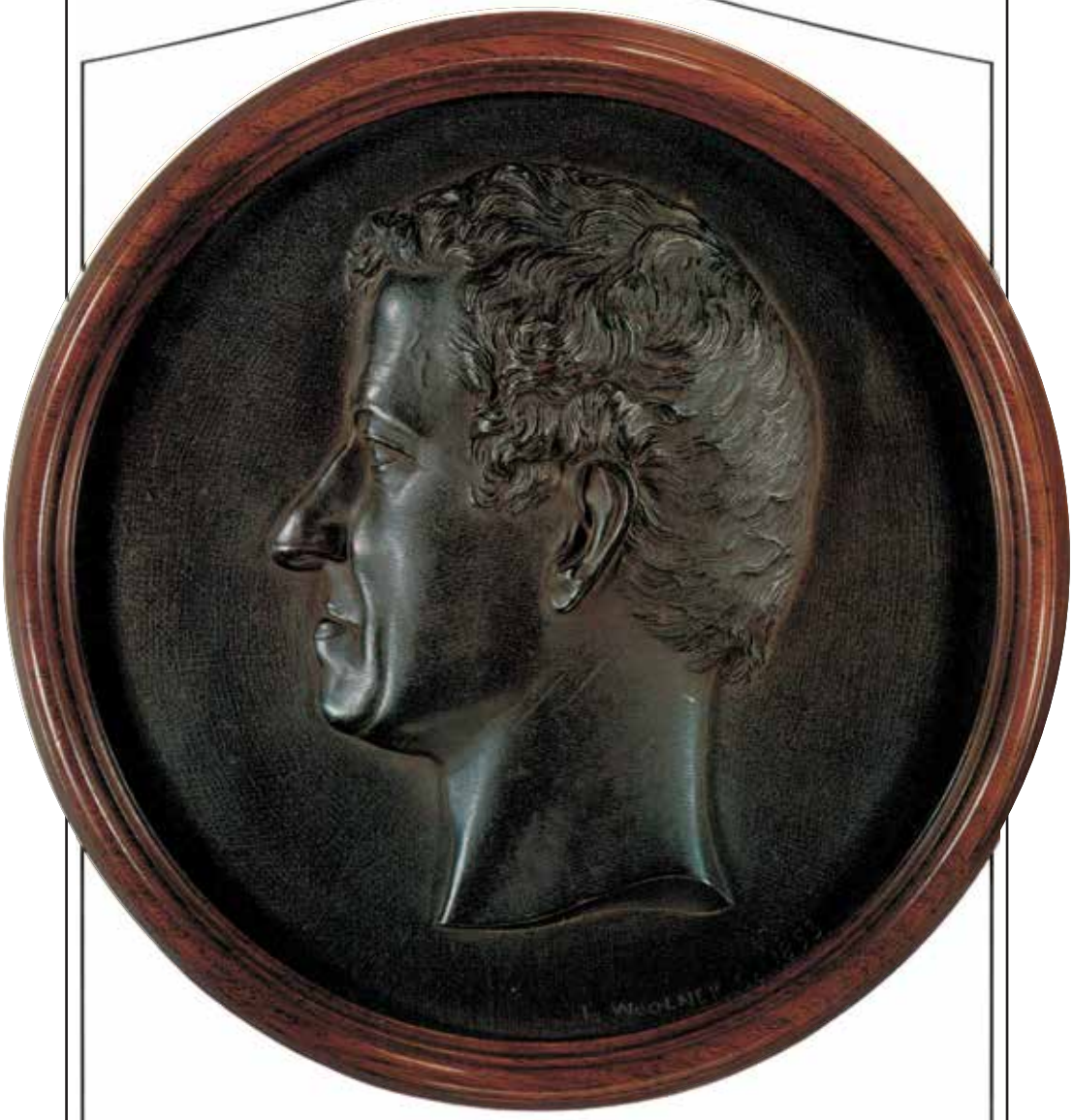
La Trobeana



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

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

La Trobeana is published three times a year: in March, July and November. The journal publishes peer-reviewed articles, as well as other written contributions, that explore themes in the life and times of Charles Joseph La Trobe, aspects of the colonial period of Victoria's history, and the wider La Trobe family.

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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 final edition of *La Trobeana* for 2019 brings to readers the results of research carried out by four members of the La Trobe Society on very different aspects of the La Trobe era.

The first is a revised version of the La Trobe Society Lecture by Professor Wallace Kirsop which opened the prestigious Melbourne Rare Book Week in July this year. Titled 'Books and Reading in La Trobe's Melbourne', this wide-ranging and detailed account about the birth of the book trade in Port Phillip and about those who were the earliest book buyers in this part of the British Empire makes for fascinating reading. This is erudite research on a little-known aspect of Victorian colonial life which will be valued by historians in the future.

Dr Liz Rushen's article 'Garryowen: The Voice of Early Melbourne' was originally delivered as the 2019 AGL Shaw Lecture in April to members of the La Trobe Society and the Royal Historical Society of Victoria. Based on research she is carrying out as a State Library Victoria Creative Fellow for a biography, this paper sheds light on one of Melbourne's first investigative journalists, Edmund Finn, whose *Chronicles of Early Melbourne,* published in 1888 under his pen-name 'Garryowen', records his memories of daily life in La Trobe's Melbourne.

Tim Gatehouse gave members the pleasure of hearing about his most recent research into La Trobe family connections in a lecture as part of the Society's Sunday Talks for Members program in June this year. The first article based on this talk (*La Trobeana*, July 2019) gave an account of William Henry Foster's life up to October 1851. The second instalment, 'William Henry Foster: his life in Victoria', is a fascinating account of the life of La Trobe's cousin after reaching the colony.

Susan Priestley's detailed research, following the special viewing in May for members of the La Trobe Society of the La Trobe Testimonial Candelabrum Centrepiece at the National Gallery of Victoria, has led to her ground-breaking article on this silver commemorative piece. Close inspection of it revealed the important historical allusions to La Trobe's governance of the colony of Victoria, and the information about its history in her article adds much to our appreciation of this unique artefact.

I draw your attention to the Society's concluding events for this year. We are fortunate to have Paul de Serville, author of the Melbourne Club's recently published history, as guest speaker for our Christmas function to be held at the Club on 29 November. This will be an evening to remember! As usual, members are invited to attend the service to commemorate the anniversary of Charles Joseph La Trobe's death which will be held at St Peter's Church, Eastern Hill on 1 December. They are also invited to attend an afternoon of 'The La Trobes' Music' on 1 December at La Trobe's Cottage, featuring musicians performing works that would have been heard in and around *Jolimont*.

Finally, I would like to warmly congratulate our Honorary Secretary Dr Dianne Reilly AM FRHSV who was inducted as a Fellow of Monash University on Wednesday 23 October in recognition of her distinguished career as an historian and author, co-founder of the C J La Trobe Society, and for her work as a strong advocate for promoting French-Australian relations.

Early as it is, my warmest Christmas greetings to you all, and best wishes for a peaceful and productive 2020.

Diane Gardiner AM
Hon. President
C J La Trobe Society

Unknown photographer
Megan Anderson, 2019

Sir Francis Grant, 1803–1878
Charles Joseph La Trobe, 1855
Oil on canvas
City of Melbourne Art and Heritage Collection

La Trobe Society Fellowship 2019-2020

It is with great pleasure that we announce the recipient of the 2019-2020 La Trobe Society Fellowship at State Library Victoria.

Megan Anderson, Costume Production Assistant at Sovereign Hill Museums Association, is involved in researching and producing historically accurate reproduction clothing that is subsequently used as interpretive and educational tools within the Ballarat living history museum. Her Fellowship project is titled *Extravagance, tradition and power: an exploration of Lieutenant-Governor Charles La Trobe's uniform.*

Megan's project will explore the significance, history, tradition and symbolism encompassed in the uniform of Lieutenant–Governor Charles La Trobe. Within the garment industry, tailoring is extensively revered as the highest standard of garment construction, with the highest quality achieved. Ceremonial uniforms, including that of Lieutenant-Governor, are from an even higher echelon; every element of this uniform was designed to impress, emphasise and enhance the wearer in both status and stature.

As holder of the highest office in the new colony of Victoria, a distinguished uniform to solidify that position was absolutely necessary for La Trobe. As the American writer Mark Twain once observed, perhaps a little facetiously, 'Clothes make the man. Naked people have little or no influence on society'.

It can be easy to disregard clothing as a significant tool for fundamental research; fashion can be frivolous, superficial and frequently disposable. The rationale for Megan's research proposal is the unequivocal contrary of that statement. The outcome of her research will include an impeccably tailored suit with accents of gold and silver, and may also result in a collaborative exhibition.

La Trobe Society members will have the pleasure of meeting Megan Anderson at a function in the course of 2020.

Bishop James Grant AM

1931–2019

A Tribute

Bishop James Grant, a former assistant Bishop of Melbourne and Dean of St Paul's Cathedral from 1985 until his retirement in 1999, and foundation member of the La Trobe Society, has died on 10 July 2019 after 60 years in ordained ministry and almost half a century as a bishop.

The La Trobe Society was represented at his funeral at St Paul's Cathedral by members Loreen Chambers, Vice-President, John Chambers and Susan Priestley — Loreen noting that it was 'nearly two hours of wonderful music and readings, a superb tribute to an extraordinary man'.

Bishop Grant played an instrumental role over nearly seventy years in building Trinity College as a vital part of the University of Melbourne, taking on roles such as chaplain, acting warden, bequests officer and historian.

A graduate of the University of Melbourne, history was a life-long interest for Bishop Grant. In 2017, he recalled in an article in Trinity College's alumni magazine, *Trinity Today*: 'When I graduated, Australian historian Geoffrey Serle had just been commissioned to write a documental history of Melbourne in readiness for the 1956 Olympics and he hired me for a year as his research assistant… The end result was *The Melbourne Scene, 1803-1956* (1957; 2nd ed. 1978), published under the joint authorship of Grant and Serle'. His other books included a history of Trinity College, *Perspective of a Century* (1972), a history of the Anglican Church in Victoria, *Episcopally Led and Synodically Governed: Anglicans in Victoria 1803-1997* (2010), and *St Paul's Cathedral Melbourne* (2014).

Well known as a church historian, Bishop Grant was Patron of the Anglican Historical Society from 1983. He consolidated the sizeable archives of St Paul's during his time as Dean — a collection that now bears his name.

A great supporter of the La Trobe Society since it was founded, and a regular attender at its lectures and other functions, he will be greatly missed.

Our deepest sympathy is extended to his wife Ms Rowena Armstrong AO, QC, and a former Advocate for the Melbourne diocese who was Chief Parliamentary Counsel for Victoria for fifteen years.

Dianne Reilly AM
Hon. Secretary

Books and Readers in La Trobe's Melbourne

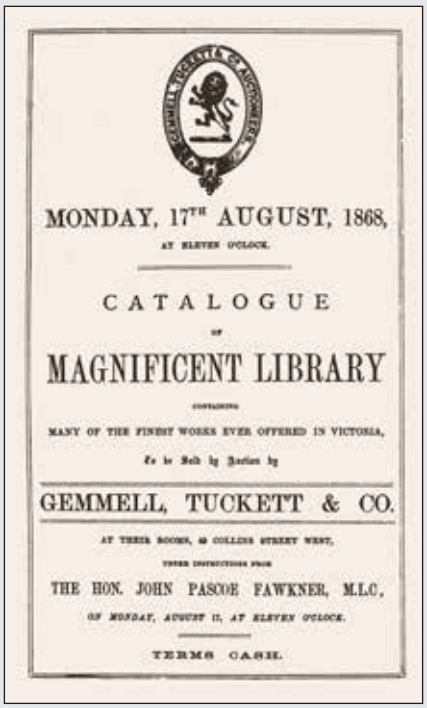
By Professor Wallace Kirsop

Wallace Kirsop is an Affiliate in the School of Languages, Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics at Monash University, and Professorial Fellow, Engagement, The University of Melbourne. He taught French at the University of Sydney in 1955 and 1960–1962 before holding a position at Monash University from 1962 to 1998. From 1968 till 2002 he was Editor of the Australian Journal of French Studies. His main research interests are nineteenth-century Australian book history and studies of the French book world from the late sixteenth to early nineteenth centuries.

This is a revised version of the La Trobe Society Melbourne Rare Book Week lecture given on 5 July 2019.

It is possible to argue in a rough-and-ready way that there were four stages in the history of the book in Australia from the first European settlement till Federation. The first was characterised by makeshifts and individual endeavour. People brought books and pamphlets with them for their own use, but also to organise elementary schooling, to foster the moral improvement of transported convicts and to engage in missionary activity. However, given the weight of officialdom in penal colonies, government presses for public announcements and eventually for the production of strictly controlled and censored newspapers were in evidence from an early date. The second phase involved the development of a free press, the emergence of institutional and commercial libraries and more systematic importation of printed material for sale to a handful of booksellers and for public auction to buyers of all kinds. The third period after mid-century saw the creation of wholesaling firms with London buying offices, the proliferation of retailers with genuine professional competence, the expansion of sophisticated publishing on a local level and concerted attempts to satisfy the needs of a society aspiring to political maturity and intellectual independence. The fourth stage, after 1890, witnessed the gradual subjugation of the colonial trade to the publishers of the metropolis, represented more and more frequently by their own branches and agencies, thus bypassing Australia-based wholesalers and distributors. At the same time it should be recognised that our own publishing firms and magazines became more assertive and, in some cases, stridently nationalistic in these decades. One never escapes old contradictions.[1]

The timetable of the phases varied from one colony to another. In the case of Victoria, or more properly the Port Phillip District, the succession was foreshortened or truncated, if you will. In the twenty years from the Hentys in Portland to La Trobe's departure in May 1854 we move from uncertain beginnings leaning on the quite advanced culture of Van Diemen's Land to the eve of the third stage, in which Melbourne was to play the major role in the Australian colonies as a whole. La Trobe's decade and a half as Superintendent and then Lieutenant-Governor of the newly separated colony coincided thus with a remarkably rapid evolution of what I shall call the book world. No



MONDAY, 17TH AUGUST, 1868,

AT ELEVEN O'CLOCK.

CATALOGUE

OF

MAGNIFICENT LIBRARY

CONTAINING

MANY OF THE FINEST WORKS EVER OFFERED IN VICTORIA,

To be Sold by Auction by

GEMMELL, TUCKETT & CO.

AT THEIR ROOMS, 49 COLLINS STREET WEST,

UNDER INSTRUCTIONS FROM

THE HON. JOHN PASCOE FAWKNER, M.L.C.,

ON MONDAY, AUGUST 17, AT ELEVEN O'CLOCK.

TERMS CASH.

John Pascoe Fawkner's Library: sale catalogue, Gemmell, Tuckett & Co, 1868
'Catalogue of magnificent library containing many of the finest works ever offered in Victoria' Facsimile (Melbourne: Book Collectors Society of Australia, 1985)

doubt much of what happened did not depend on the person who was at the helm, but we know that La Trobe's input and support were critical in some of the public initiatives that buttressed the launch into the stage of substantial cultural autonomy for Victoria and for its capital. In this sense one can speak of La Trobe's Melbourne and try to sketch briefly what was taking shape.

For much of the period we are blessed with exceptional reference tools: the bibliographies of Sir John Ferguson,[2] Morris Miller[3] and Sir Edward Ford;[4] C.P. Billot's *Melbourne: an annotated bibliography to 1850*;[5] Elizabeth Webby's series of articles in the *Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand Bulletin* in 1978 and 1979 listing early Australian booksellers' and auctioneers' catalogues and advertisements up to 1849 inclusive;[6] Thomas A. Darragh's *Printer and Newspaper Registration in Victoria 1838-1924*;[7] the same author's forthcoming *Dictionary of Engravers and Lithographers in Victoria to 1920*.[8] Elizabeth Webby's research, done for a University of Sydney PhD in the late 1960s and early 1970s, is particularly valuable. Long before Trove, and its temptation to pass too quickly over context, she worked through all Australian newspapers of the first half of the nineteenth century by hand. The sampling I have been able to do of newspapers and magazines produced during La Trobe's last five years and of the then growing number of commercial directories is insignificant in comparison with her labours. However, it is perhaps sufficient for a preliminary picture of the situation.

It makes sense to proceed by looking in turn at categories that lead us from the individual to the collective. I begin with private libraries, then move to the auction mart and rudimentary bookselling, before tackling the collections of institutions and commercial reading rooms. Next comes the establishment of thoroughly professional dealers, and finally the first serious steps in publishing, in which the newspaper press is almost predictably dominant. We have to remember, of course, that printing was there almost from the start, even though Melbourne was not the seat of government formally till Separation on 1 July 1851. Then, too, we should not forget that a government press operated for a few months from October 1803 in Sorrento before David Collins' party moved to Hobart. In conclusion I want to evoke one or two of the ways in which the record can be explored further.

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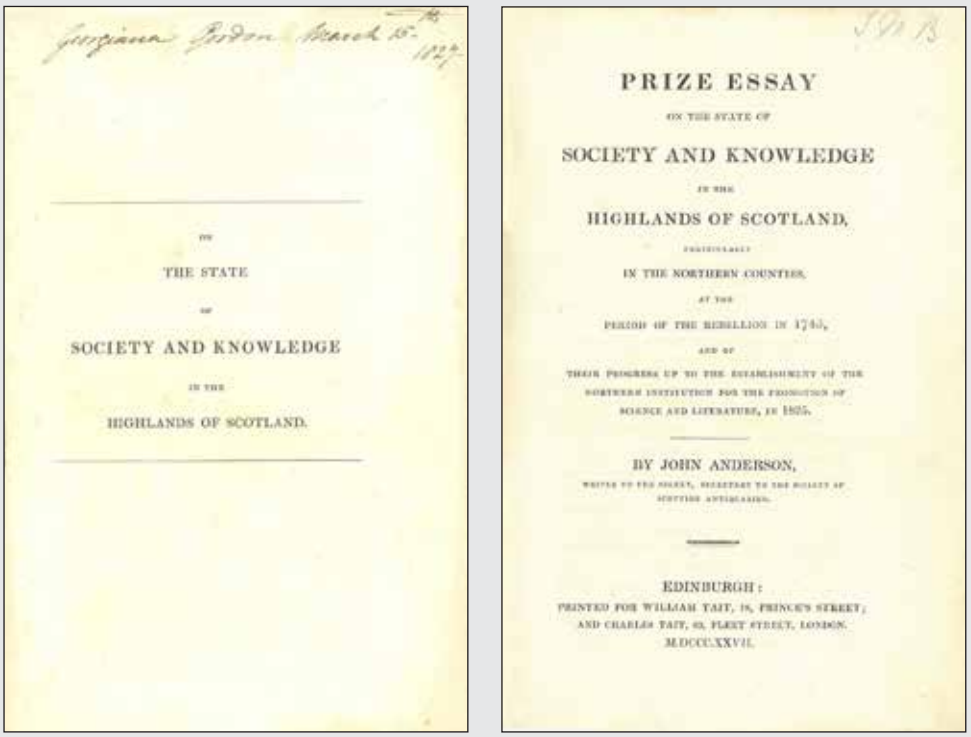
Almost unavoidably we know very little about the small collections of books that ordinary folk brought with them to Victoria in the colony's Port Phillip years and even later. Our probate papers are usually laconic about such things, and, unlike France, we do not oblige notaries/solicitors to keep the documents prepared for their clients and to pass them over to public repositories. As a result information is sporadic—in the form, say, of a volume surviving in a second-hand shop and bearing a signature and a date before or after emigration from the



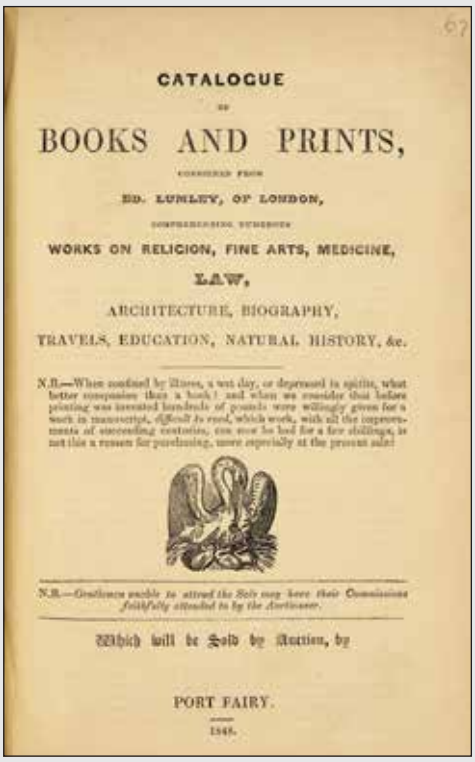
John Anderson
Prize essay on the state of society and knowledge in the Highlands of Scotland, Edinburgh, 1827
'Particularly in the Northern Counties at the period of rebellion in 1745, and of their progress up to the establishment of the Northern Institution for the Promotion of Science and Literature, in 1825'.
Half-title inscribed Georgiana Gordon, March 15th 1827.
Private collection.

British Isles. As such it is at best indicative, if it is not dismissed as purely anecdotal. To go further down that path—especially after much more than a century of discarding of 'unimportant' books—is starkly challenging.

What needs underlining is that the founders of European Melbourne were not ordinary people, whatever had brought them to some sort of prominence. Enterprise and adventurism could be as determining as social and official status. Notoriety ensured that books that had belonged to them were likely to be preserved. In several cases detailed records of their libraries were compiled, often for the auction sales that were the normal way of disposing of property in nineteenth-century Australia whether the owners died, went bankrupt or simply left the colony. Nearly thirty people listed in the five volumes of Charles Stitz's recent and important *Australian Book Collectors*[9] spent part of their lives in Victoria in La Trobe's time. They cannot all be discussed here, and indeed I propose to go outside that list as well to indicate ways in which books and occasionally a real bookish culture played a role in the settlement's foundation years.

Curiously the very first private collection to be auctioned in Melbourne—on 5 June 1839, while the La Trobes were on the ship bringing them to Australia—was that of John Batman. There was no printed catalogue, and the advertisement in the *Port Phillip Patriot* mentions, rather unhelpfully, 'Works of the first Authors, and in splendid binding'.[10] On the other hand we know a great deal more about the books in the life of John Pascoe Fawkner.[11] The sale catalogue of 1868 was the tip of an iceberg. It was preceded by several decades of bookselling, publishing—chiefly newspapers—and lending, intermingled with gifts, notably to the libraries of mechanics' institutes. The complete story remains to be told, but survivors from Fawkner's various collections are not unknown in the market even now.

Although no special publicity was given to it in the nineteenth century, there were clearly books in the cultivated household of Georgiana McCrae. A recent find of her copy of John Anderson's *Prize Essays on the State of Society and Knowledge in the Highlands of Scotland* will have to do duty as evidence. We hardly need reminding that from the beginning Victoria, like the rest of the Australian colonies, reflected the linguistic,



CATALOGUE

OF

BOOKS AND PRINTS,

CONSIGNED FROM

ED. LUMLEY, OF LONDON,

COMPREHENDING NUMEROUS

WORKS ON RELIGION, FINE ARTS, MEDICINE,

LAW,

ARCHITECTURE, BIOGRAPHY,

TRAVELS, EDUCATION, NATURAL HISTORY, &c.

N.B.—When confined by illness, a wet day, or depressed in spirits, what better companion than a book? and when we consider that before printing was invented hundreds of pounds were willingly given for a work in manuscript, difficult to read, which work, with all the improvements of succeeding centuries, can now be had for a few shillings, is not this a reason for purchasing, more especially at the present sale!

N.B.—Gentlemen unable to attend the Sale may have their Commissions faithfully attended to by the Auctioneer.

Which will be Sold by Auction, by

PORT FAIRY.

1848.

Catalogue of books and prints consigned from Ed. Lumley of London, which will be sold at auction, Port Fairy, 1848
'Comprising numerous works on religion, fine arts, medicine, law, architecture, biography, travels, education, natural history, &c.'
Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.

cultural and religious diversity of the whole of the British Isles.

Irishmen, both Catholic and Protestant, were predictably prominent in the Melbourne book world. James Alipius Goold, the first Catholic Bishop, is now receiving his due as a collector of books and art works, as well as a patron of architects.[12] Kevin Molloy has done much in recent years to uncover the Catholic Irish dimension of the early Victorian book trade and of the bibliophilic society of the colony.[13] However, the major figure, bridging three of my phases, is Redmond Barry, the 'cultural commissar' in Ann Galbally's phrase.[14] Although we do not have as much information as we would like about the personal collection dispersed by auction in March 1881,[15] we are aware that, long before his major public creations of the 1850s, Barry was making books available in his house to interested persons. This is the essence of the self-help and sharing of the first difficult stage of book provision in the pioneer years.

Professionals (ecclesiastics, lawyers, doctors, architects and teachers) all had perforce the books they needed for their work and leisure. Some were brought from abroad, but others were acquired over decades from a base in Melbourne. Surviving catalogues fill out the record for several of the people in these categories: the Reverends Alexander Morison[16] and John Herbert Gregory;[17] Archibald Michie[18] and William a'Beckett;[19] John Maund[20] and Richard Tracy;[21] James Blackburn;[22] William Hearn.[23] Alongside this there are the Scottish pastoralists like John Lang Currie[24] and George Russell,[25] miners like William Rae of Happy Valley, Bendigo,[26] and public servants like G.W. Rusden.[27] Let us not forget an outlier like George McArthur, the baker of Maldon and benefactor of the University of Melbourne.[28]

Bookishness could be learnt too through childhood and adolescence in La Trobe's Melbourne. Two outstanding examples are E.A. Petherick, bookseller and publisher,[29] and John Macgregor, solicitor and politician, whose collection of 10,000 volumes produced in 1884 the biggest sale of a private holding in colonial Australia.[30] Petherick worked for many years in the trade in England, whereas Macgregor, who had arrived in Melbourne as a twelve-year-old in 1840, made his way locally, with abundant recourse to London antiquarian booksellers like Bernard Quaritch. Is it necessary to point out that the greatest Australian collector, David Scott Mitchell, operated entirely from his base in Sydney?

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Apart from being the vehicle of disposal for no longer wanted private libraries, the auction mart served from the earliest colonial period across the continent as the place to distribute


ADVERTISEMENTS.

ESTABLISHED 1853.

MELBOURNE CIRCULATING LIBRARY.

Terms of Subscription:

THREE MONTHS...£1 (TWO) SETS OF BOOKS
TWELVE MONTHS...£3 (THREE) ALLOWED
TWELVE MONTHS...£5 (SIX) AT ONE TIME.

The Subscription always dating from the Day of Entry.

Non-Subscribers also accommodated and charged by the Volume, Weekly.

The Library consists of nearly 3,500 Volumes of the most popular Works in History, Poetry, Fiction, &c., and New Books of interest are added as they appear.

The Leading English Magazines and Reviews are also liberally supplied by each Monthly Overland Mail.

T. M. BUZZARD,

BOOKSELLER AND STATIONER,

181 BOURKE STREET, EAST,

OPPOSITE THE EASTERN MARKET

Advertisement, T.M. Buzzard, Bookseller and Stationer, in the Catalogue of the Melbourne Circulating Library, Bourke Street East, established 1853
Dixson Library, State Library of New South Wales, 85/653 (http://www.ucd.ie/southhem/record.html#478)

imported printed material. Melbourne was no exception to this practice. Given the relative weakness in those years of the trade as such, it has to be assumed that most of the buyers were private individuals. Since the available evidence is almost entirely contained in newspaper advertisements and not in printed catalogues, there is a great deal that we do not know. Nonetheless, there are a few glimpses of what was at play when wholesaling merchants were not yet organising and controlling bookselling.

Some members of the British trade, especially in London, had understood quite early, and certainly by the 1830s, that there was a market for books in the Australian colonies. Consignments were sent to agents in the relevant ports for public auction. There was a certain condescension, not to say cynicism, in the way in which titles were selected. In some respects this could be considered a form of dumping, notably of remainders. Since the whole enterprise was speculative, the results achieved could vary wildly depending on the state of the market and of the economy when cargoes arrived.

While most participants seem to have concentrated on 'cheap books', so much sought after by the nineteenth century's expanding literate classes, one bookseller/publisher, Edward Lumley of London, took a somewhat different tack. By good fortune he is also the best documented, not least because he prepared unusually careful printed catalogues to accompany his consignments, which went for three decades from the 1840s to the 1870s to several ports in Australia and New Zealand, as well as to North America. Enough of these quite substantial productions have survived for us to have a good idea of what he was selling.

The only Melbourne Lumley catalogue at present known is from 1856, thus beyond our period. However, as was revealed by Sally Graham in her *Pioneer Merchant: the letters of James Graham 1839-54* of 1985, Lumley was trying out the market in the Port Phillip District as early as 1844. The books sent, and which were auctioned by Brodie and Cruikshank over two and a half days from 11 April that year, reached Melbourne without catalogues, so Graham had to arrange a local substitute, which we do not now possess. Graham's report to Lumley on the outcome says bluntly: 'had the Books been of a better quality and description, I have no doubt that a very handsome profit would have been netted'.[31]

The evidence seems to suggest that the message was heeded. We do have the thirty-four page catalogue of the 625 lots—over 1,200 volumes—sent to Port Fairy in 1848.[32] Although fiction was present in the offering, many serious titles were included. Most were printed in the first decades of the nineteenth century, but earlier periods were also represented. There were

a few items to tempt the bibliophile: Samuel Parr's copy of Crabbe's *Poems* of 1807; the two text volumes of Flinders' *Voyage to Terra Australis*; Luther's *Sermons* in black letter (gothic typeface); Wallis's *Australian Views*.[33] In short, these sales, like those of private collections already in the colony, could bring surprises.

Before Separation Melbourne's bookselling trade was weak and disorganised. A saving grace was the cultural benefit of being, if I may put it tendentiously, a suburb of Launceston. Fawkner in particular brought considerable experience in various aspects of selling, advertising and lending. The rapid creation of newspapers was critical. It was an entirely free press, because the government was far away in Sydney. As in the capital of New South Wales bookselling began in and around newspaper offices. Advertisements for books for sale first came in that settlement from George Howe, the creator of the *Sydney Gazette* in 1803. In Melbourne the corresponding names are Fawkner and William Kerr, incidentally the father-in-law of the collector John Macgregor. Kerr's *Melbourne Almanac* of 1841 was published by the Book and Stationery Warehouse of Kerr and Holmes, whose three-page advertisement[34] gives some notion of the range of goods carried in such establishments, and not just in the colonies. There are intriguing parallels with the sort of diversification we see in bookshops in the twenty-first century. In the event neither Fawkner nor Kerr continued to concentrate on bookselling in this broad sense, so that the scene became uncertain if not anarchical later in the 1840s.

Outside establishments closely linked to the various denominations, the only long-lasting importation and distribution book business in the Australian colonies before 1851 was that of the brothers James and Samuel Augustus Tegg, sons of the celebrated Thomas Tegg of Cheapside. They had set up in Sydney and Van Diemen's Land in the 1830s, but they had disappeared by mid-century.[35] The Hobart shop was taken over by the Walches in 1846. Fortunately, some of the earliest records of that firm have been preserved, so we know exactly what it sent to George Cooper in Melbourne on 8 February 1847. Cooper is listed in Mouritz's *Port Phillip Almanac and Directory, for 1847* as 'bookbinder, Elizabeth street'.[36] He received an invoice valued in total at £43/11/2. Unusually, stationery and fancy goods were a small part of what was sent, so we have scores of book titles, not infrequently in multiple copies. A few examples will give an idea of the variety: '2 Owen on Temptation', '2 Hall on Infidelity', '2 Hannah Mores Essays', '4 Murray's English Reader', '5 Goldsmiths Greece abridged', '2 Wilberforce's Christianity', '4 Fairburn's Singing Books', '5 Scott's Marmion', '18 Toast Master', '2 Guide to College of Surgeons', '6 Wesley's Hymns', '1 Tragédies de Voltaire', '25 Child's Story Books', '10 Rasselas', '20 Cooks Voyages', at one shilling and three pence each, be it added.[37]

We have to assume, of course, that private persons as well as institutions were buying direct, then as now, from the Northern Hemisphere. While there is often archival evidence about the latter category—vouchers, purchase orders, decisions minuted, and so forth— for individuals we depend on the chance survival of correspondence.

On the spot in Melbourne there were also informal networks, but they are very hard to pin down. What was the role of hawkers and stall-keepers? We have one solid piece of evidence. On 26 June 1841 Redmond Barry himself bought from an 'eccentric old fellow from Dublin' who was selling 'many curious & rare works' from under some trees at the corner of Collins and Swanston Streets two volumes that had belonged to his own uncle Lieutenant-Colonel Redmond Barry.[38] Serendipity was certainly at work in La Trobe's Melbourne.

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Where resources are reasonable, most people rely on institutional libraries for a large part of their reading matter. The founders of Melbourne understood this and worked from the beginning to create the conditions of wide if not universal access to books. A small population and remoteness were an obvious impediment, but before La Trobe's departure much had been achieved or put in place for the future. Redmond Barry was not the only 'cultural evangelist' in the new settlement.

At the start there was private enterprise. Bookselling and hiring out of volumes had gone hand in hand for centuries in the Old World. It was a tradition Fawkner brought to Melbourne from Launceston, and he soon found an imitator in Kerr. Were there printed catalogues of these collections? If so, they have vanished. This is not astonishing, because book trade ephemera—prospectuses, catalogues of all kinds, and the rest—have a very poor survival rate in Australia and indeed in other places. We know from directories that there was another circulating library run on a commercial basis before La Trobe's replacement. Originally it was Buzzard and Vale, then it was T.M. Buzzard alone at 181 Bourke Street East, opposite the

Samuel Thomas Gill, 1818-1880, artist, attrib.
Arcade, 1856
Pencil, ink wash on paper
Pictures Collection, State Library Victoria, H90.91/540
From a scrapbook containing photographs, newspaper clippings and drawings by S T Gill and other artists, from the publishing firm James J Blundell & Co.
Queen's Arcade was designed by James and Charles Webb, and initially called Melbourne Arcade. It was opened on 26 September 1853 and demolished in 1875.

Eastern Market. Operating from 1853 it was still in business at the end of the decade. Miraculously there is a printed catalogue, bearing James Edward Neild's signature, in the Dixson Library in Sydney.[39] Its inclusion of *Little Dorrit*, but not *A Tale of Two Cities*, suggests that it was issued in 1858, therefore beyond the La Trobe period. Predictably fiction makes up a large part of the holdings, but other subjects are respectably covered. A list of nineteen overseas journals 'Received by each Overland Mail' includes the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, a reminder that the gentry who could afford to subscribe may well, in the fashion of the time, have been able to read French. Nothing more substantial was to appear on Melbourne's commercial library scene till Mullen's opened in Collins Street in 1859 and came to dominate the sector till the end of the century and beyond. The essence of the lending library business was to be able to supply new titles quickly to customers, so Buzzard stocked several copies of the works of fashionable novelists.

A wider public was catered for at more moderate cost by the Mechanics' Institution and School of Arts founded in 1839, only a few years before a similar venture in Geelong. Successive annual reports listed donations to the library and museum of what we now call the Melbourne Athenaeum. The 1844 report published in 1845 sets out the still relatively modest collection of books. By 1854 the growth of the institution is reflected in a much longer catalogue.[40] Fiction now occupies a large place.

Some citizens had access to borrowable books through their churches. Printed catalogues are rare, but the Ferguson Collection of the National Library of Australia holds an 1848 pamphlet listing what was available, at more reasonable cost again, in the Melbourne Diocesan Lending Library of the Anglican Church.[41] Fiction's share is considerably more restricted.

Even though Melbourne's population was under 30,000 at the beginning of the 1850s, there were clear aspirations for more library provision. There was talk as early as 1844 of a subscription institution on the model of those already existing in Sydney and Hobart. The ambition is concrete in the listing in P.W. Pierce's *Melbourne Commercial Directory* of 1853 of the 'Victoria Subscription Library' complete with its office-bearers and committee.[42] Somehow this morphed into the Melbourne Public Library, an altogether different creation that stands in some ways at the centre of my third phase.

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Historically retail trading has always been precarious. Dealers change premises frequently; they decide to move to other cities or countries; they go bankrupt. This instability is evident in the Melbourne directories of the 1850s and in their lists of people involved in the various facets of the book trade. Factor in the gold rush and a fourfold increase in population over the decade

and you have not only a boom, but also a quite explosive situation given the lack of importing and marketing infrastructure. As the Walches discovered in the relative calm of Hobart, the accidents of over- and undersupply from speculative consignments played havoc with pricing. The crisis called for remedial measures on a radical scale, hence the developments that followed very quickly after La Trobe stepped down from his position.

Two things made change possible: the unprecedentedly rapid increase in the size of the local and general Australian market, and the fact that the gold fever had attracted to Victoria people with the requisite professional skills. Scrutinising the directories and the advertisement columns of a growing number of newspapers enables us to pinpoint what was happening.

Virtually from the beginning in Melbourne there had been printers and engravers, a very different situation from Port Jackson in 1788. The production of newspapers, pamphlets and even quite sophisticated volumes like the Kerr almanac was possible, not to speak of the easy turning out of jobbing work to facilitate administrative and commercial activities. On the other hand, as we have already noticed, there was no apparent continuity of bookselling businesses. If we look at the directories for 1853, 1854 and 1855 the bookseller and stationer category is clearly present, even in suburbs like Richmond and Collingwood.[43] Not all the firms were destined to have long lives, but some would survive not only the decade, but also the century.

The 1853 list of fourteen names has one stayer: Charlwood & Son, at 7 Bourke Street East. William Baker, of the Church of England Book Depot, 71 Swanston Street, had already had a publishing career in Sydney in the 1840s, after his emigration from Dublin, and in 1853 he was also running a circulating library and publishing business in Bendigo before finally disappearing.[44] His virtual successor, at least in the Anglican connection in Melbourne, was Samuel Mullen.[45] James Shanley, the printer and publisher of the 1853 directory, has recently been the subject of an important article by Kevin Molloy and Katie Flack.[46] His early death in 1857 cut short a significant career in the Irish Catholic world of Victoria.

The future is much more obvious when one looks at the 1854 list. W.B. Bennett and then his son Frederick were to play a part till the turn of the century.[47] George Slater and Sands and Kenny, later Sands & McDougall, founded firms that prospered on the one hand in Brisbane till much later in the 1800s and on the other locally till close to the present day. James Blundell and George Nichols were notable figures in the Melbourne trade in the 1850s and 1860s. Whereas we know the offerings of their predecessors exclusively from advertisements—quite frequent in the early press—the later booksellers issued catalogues, some of which have been preserved.

The one really portentous name in the 1854 and 1855 lists is that of George Robertson, then in Collins Street East.[48] He had arrived in Melbourne on the *Great Britain* in November 1852, with his former colleague Samuel Mullen also on board. Fortuitously E.W. Cole, the future creator of the Book Arcade, reached the port on the same day. Robertson, who had had his own bookshop in Dublin, was to size up the fundamental weakness of a trade without assured and affordable supplies and to move in 1857 to set up a London buying office. He was preceded in this by the Walches, but the greater weight of Melbourne meant that he would become the whole continent's greatest importer and wholesaler. He was also by far the most active publisher of books in nineteenth-century Australia. The expanding Melbourne of La Trobe was the right place to come.

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What one has to remember is that the history of books in Australia is at bottom about titles imported here from elsewhere rather than about what we produced ourselves. This is not to downplay what we achieved. In the late nineteenth century some Australians had a keen sense of the comparative quality of local publications and were able to look at the Northern Hemisphere from what one journalist only half ironically called 'the armchair of Antipodean superiority'.[49] None the less we have to face the fact that we are a small part of a very large English-speaking world and that all of its literature is ours to take and to absorb. As late as a few decades ago overseas sources accounted for 85 per cent of our book consumption. In the 1850s what was local was essentially utilitarian (almanacs, directories, guides), polemical or uplifting (pamphlets and sermons), or ephemeral (catalogues and prospectuses). There was one exception: the newspaper press. This was the bulk of what was written and printed. Yet we tend to regard it as a quarry for information—especially since the advent of Trove—rather than as a medium deserving consideration in its own right.

In the last thirty years or so there has been some thorough and insightful research into Australian newspapers. Paradoxically the country and provincial press has been perhaps

better covered than the metropolitan dailies. The *Age* and David Syme have had concentrated attention, but they fall just outside the La Trobe period. What about the *Argus* and the *Herald*? And then there are the forgotten ventures of the period. My brief sampling of them revealed not only booksellers' advertisements but a genuine seriousness, compared, say, with the vacuity of much of what we see in newsagencies today. Who knows Hugh McColl's *Banner*, which had a brief life in La Trobe's last two Melbourne years? The list could be extended. In these sheets we can read syndicated or original fiction, study politics, commerce, agriculture, sport, science, take in the news of the day from all of the world—with the delays attendant on shipping at the time—and discover something about the new books being published here and elsewhere. On any calculation the newspaper and to a lesser extent the magazine provide the bulk of what was being read in Melbourne before 1854. They must be at the centre of the sort of study I have hinted at.

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May I end with a couple of questions or suggestions? Our knowledge of trade personnel is at best fragmentary. We ought to have dictionaries of publishers, booksellers and letterpress printers to put alongside Tom Darragh's engravers and lithographers. The French are providing an excellent model for their eighteenth century.[50]

Place and space are also of great importance. The directories show where people had their businesses and that they moved them about. Melbourne in the 1850s had ethnic and religious communities concentrated in certain areas. A society that was essentially British before 1850—with all the diversity that that implies—was becoming discreetly multicultural after the gold rush. Prosperity was making it possible to shape Melbourne as a *Residenzstadt*,[51] something that La Trobe himself must have wanted to promote. The long-departed Queen's Arcade[52] between Lonsdale and Little Bourke Streets, sketched by S.T. Gill in 1856, added a Paris or London dimension to the urban landscape. Not surprisingly some newspapers and bookshops were quartered there.[53] Is this not the best indication of the proud pretensions of the bookish world La Trobe helped to foster?

Acknowledgment

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Endnotes

1 For a longer description of the phases see Wallace Kirsop, *Books for Colonial Readers: the nineteenth-century Australian experience*, Melbourne: The Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand, 1995, pp.1-15, 77-83, and Wallace Kirsop, 'Bookselling and Publishing in the Nineteenth Century', in D. H. Borchardt & W. Kirsop (eds), *The Book in Australia: essays towards a cultural & social history*, Melbourne: Australian Reference Publications, 1988, pp.16-42, 174-181.

2 *Bibliography of Australia, Sydney*: Angus and Robertson Ltd, 1941-1969, 7 volumes and *Bibliography of Australia: Addenda 1784-1850* (Volumes I to IV), Canberra: National Library of Australia, 1986.

3 *Australian Literature from its Beginnings to 1935*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1940, 2 vols.

4 *Bibliography of Australian Medicine 1790-1900*, Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1976.

5 Geelong: Rippleside Press, 1970.

6 'A Checklist of Early Australian Booksellers' and Auctioneers' Catalogues and Advertisements: 1800-1849', *BSANZ Bulletin*, vol. 3, 1978, pp.123-148; vol. 4, 1979, pp.33-61; vol. 4, 1979, pp.95-150.

7 Wellington: Elibank Press, 1997.

8 To be published by the Ancora Press, Monash University, late in 2019.

9 Charles Stitz (ed.), *Australian Book Collectors: some noted Australian book collectors & collections of the nineteenth & twentieth centuries*, Bendigo: Bread Street Press, in association with the Australian Book Auction Records, 2010-2016. (Second series, vols [II-III], Third series, vols IV-V, published Melbourne: Books of Kells.)

10 See Wallace Kirsop, 'Selling Books at Auction in 19th-century Australia: the 2009 Ferguson memorial lecture', *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, vol. 95, 2009, pp.198-214, especially p.205.

11 *John Pascoe Fawkner's Library: facsimile of the sale catalogue of 1868, with an introductory essay by Wallace Kirsop*, Melbourne: Book Collectors Society of Australia, 1985.

12 Jaynie Anderson, Max Vodola and Shane Carmody (eds.), *The Invention of Melbourne: a baroque archbishop and a gothic architect*, Melbourne: Miegunyah Press, 2019; Stitz, IV (2016), pp.181-191.

13 See, for example, 'Cheap Reading for the People: Jeremiah Moore and the development of the New South Wales book trade, 1840-1883', *Script & Print*, vol. 34, 2010, pp.216-239, and entries on Edward Hayes (1816-1870) and Nicholas Michael O'Donnell (1862-1920), Stitz, II, pp.343-352, and III, pp.568-583.

14 Ann Galbally, *Redmond Barry: an Anglo-Irish Australian*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1995, p.83.

15 See Wallace Kirsop, 'In Search of Redmond Barry's Private Library', *La Trobe Library Journal*, vol. 7, no.26, October 1980, pp.25-33.

16 Stitz, V, pp.416-424.

17 Stitz, I, pp.123-125.

18 Stitz, I, pp.173-175.

19 See Wallace Kirsop, 'Australian Lawyers and their Libraries in the Nineteenth Century', *BSANZ Bulletin*, vol. 18, 1994, pp.44-52, esp. p.48.

20 Stitz, III, pp.493-501.

21 Stitz, III, pp.768-769.

22 Stitz, IV, pp.4-19.

23 Stitz, I, pp.137-145.

24 Stitz, I, pp.81-82.

25 Stitz, III, pp.699-713.

26 Stitz, I, pp.212-215.

27 Stitz, III, pp.692-699.

28 Stitz, III, pp.442-476.

29 Stitz, I, pp.205-207.

30 Stitz, I, pp.162-167.

31 The episode is discussed, with due acknowledgement to Sally Graham, but with direct recourse to the Graham Brothers' papers in the University of Melbourne Archives, in Wallace Kirsop, 'From Boom to Bust in the "Chicago of the South": the 19th-century Melbourne book trade', *La Trobe Library Journal*, No.59, Autumn 1997, pp.1-14, esp. p.8.

32 The only known copy (in the Mitchell Library) was listed by Elizabeth Webby. I suspect that this consignment was what G.G. Crouch advertised for auction 'in his Shed, in Julia-street' Portland on 2 January 1849 (*Portland Guardian*, 1 January 1849, p.[2]): 'Five Cases Books, comprising about 1,200 volumes on various subjects'.

33 The library of Samuel Parr, 'the Whig Johnson', was catalogued by H.G. Bohn in 1827. Lumley is almost certainly the 'remainder publisher' responsible for issuing the last copies of the text volumes of Flinders' *Voyage*, an operation described by Jonathan Wantrup in his *Australian Rare Books 1788-1900*, Sydney: Hordern House, 1987, pp.143-144. The Luther is not identifiable from the details given. On Wallis, see Roger Butler, *Printed Images in Colonial Australia 1801-1901*, Canberra: National Gallery of Australia, 2007, pp.50-59.

34 On unnumbered advertising pages at the end of Kerr's *Melbourne Almanac, and Port Phillip Directory, for 1841: a compendium of useful and accurate information connected with Port Phillip*, Melbourne: Kerr and Holmes, Book and Stationery Warehouse, 1841.

35 See Victor Crittenden, *James Tegg: early Sydney publisher and printer; the Tegg Brothers, the Australian arm of the book empire of Thomas Tegg of London*, Canberra: Mulini Press, 2000.

36 On page 74 of the 'Directory' section.

37 Taken from 'Day Book Jan. 1846-May 1847' in the J. Walch & Sons Company Records formerly deposited in the University of Tasmania Library, Archives Section, and consulted there in 1980. The papers, of which this was no.1, are now in the Tasmanian Archives NS2863.

38 See Trevor Mills, 'A Melbourne Book-Stall in 1841', *La Trobe Library Journal*, vol.8, no.30, October 1982, pp.44-45.

39 *Catalogue of the Melbourne Circulating Library, Bourke Street East*, State Library of New South Wales, Dixson 85/653. It is available, without the wrapper with Neild's name, on the SouthHem (University College, Dublin) website, http://www.ucd.ie/southhem/record.html#478 (accessed 5 June 2019).

40 The Melbourne Mechanics' Institution and School of Arts library catalogue, without a title page, is reproduced from the State Library Victoria copy in the SouthHem database, along with the earlier documents. The 1854 text has 59 pages, and a supplement of 15 pages, http://www.ucd.ie/southhem/record.html#245 (accessed 5 June 2019).

41 *The Melbourne Diocesan Lending Library. Rules and Regulations, with a List of the Committee and a Catalogue of Books*, Melbourne: printed by William Clarke at the Herald Office, 1848 (NLA F4824), http://www.ucd.ie/southhem/record.html#51 (accessed 5 June 2019).

42 On page 127. The committee included Redmond Barry and Hugh Childers, whose role in these years deserves further scrutiny, as Michael O'Brien has suggested to me. (Refer Michael O'Brien, 'Charles La Trobe and Hugh Childers: the ladder of success in Victoria', *La Trobeana*, vol.18, no.1, March 2019, pp.19-22.)

43 In 1853 one finds, for example, 'Arthur, William, Bookseller, Young-street' in Collingwood.

44 See Richard Neville, 'Baker, William Kellett (c.1806-1857)' in Joan Kerr (ed.), *The Dictionary of Australian Artists: painters, sketchers, photographers and engravers to 1870*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1992, pp.39-40, and Wallace Kirsop, 'Baker's Juvenile Circulating Library in Sydney in the 1840s' in Barry McKay, John Hinks and Maureen Bell (eds), *Light on the Book Trade: essays in honour of Peter Isaac*, New Castle, Delaware: Oak Knoll Press, London: The British Library, 2004, pp.130-140.

45 See Wallace Kirsop, 'From Curry's to Collins Street; or How a Dubliner became the "Melbourne Mudie"', in Peter Isaac and Barry McKay (eds), *The Moving Market: continuity and change in the book trade*, New Castle, Delaware: Oak Knoll Press, 2001, pp.83-92.

46 'James Shanley of Clonmel: printer to the population of Port Phillip, 1841-1857', *Script & Print*, vol.42, no.2, 2018, pp.69-93.

47 See Wallace Kirsop, 'The Brief but Brilliant Career of Frederick Bennett, Antiquarian Bookseller', *La Trobe Library Journal*, vol.14, no.55, Autumn 1995, pp.10-17.

48 The major reference on George Robertson is still John Holroyd, *George Robertson of Melbourne 1825-1898: pioneer bookseller & publisher*, Melbourne, Robertson & Mullens, 1968. The disappearance of the firm's archives makes it difficult to envisage a comprehensive study, even if catalogues (many of them in the Petherick Collection at the National Library of Australia), advertisements and official archival material will help. A Robertson advertisement in the last number of *The Banner*, 22 September 1854, p.13 gives the flavour of his precisely targeted ambitions.

49 *Australasian*, 16 June 1888, p.33.

50 Frédéric Barbier, Sabine Juratic, Annick Mellerio, *Dictionnaire des imprimeurs, libraires et gens du livre à Paris 1701-1789*, [Vol.1] A-C, Geneva: Droz, 2007.

51 'Residenzstadt', seat of government or 'royal seat' in dictionary definitions, but the term suggests the flavour attached to the old principalities of the German lands before the creation of the Prussian Empire.

52 See the description of what was prophesied as 'the most fashionable resort of the inhabitants of Melbourne' in *The Banner*, 2 September 1853, p.7. The same paper on 23 September carried an advertisement (p.1) for the festivities attendant on the official opening by La Trobe.

53 For example, in 1854, according to *The Melbourne Commercial and Squatters' Directory for 1854* (Melbourne: James J. Blundell & Co., 1854), one finds the bookseller and stationer 'Hunter, B. A., 36 Queen's Arcade' (p.107), the music sellers 'Chapman, G., 8 and 9 Queen's Arcade' and 'Wilkie, J., 15 Collins st., ea., and 29 Queen's Arcade' (p.132) and the newspaper offices 'Arm Chair, B. A. Hunter's, 36, Queen's Arcade' and 'Diggers' Advocate', 36 Queen's Arcade' (p.132). In the following year Hunter had moved to 27 Queen's Arcade, and Wilkie was no longer there.

Alissa Duke, artist
Professor Wallace Kirsop lecturing, Melbourne Rare Book Week
Roy Morgan Research Centre, Tonic House, Flinders Lane, Melbourne, 5 July 2019
MRBW founding convenors, Jonathan Burdon and Kay Craddock, pictured in back row.

John William Lindt, 1845-1926 photographer Edmund Finn, c.1880
Photographic print, albumen silver
Pictures Collection, State Library Victoria, H3494

Garryowen: the voice of early Melbourne

By Dr Liz Rushen

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This paper is a revision of the 2019 AGL Shaw lecture given to a joint meeting of the C J La Trobe Society and the Royal Historical Society of Victoria on 16 April 2019.

Born in January 1819 in the parish of Cordangan, Tipperary, Finn arrived in Melbourne as an assisted (bounty) immigrant, with his parents and siblings in 1841. He had been well-educated in Ireland, completing his education at the prestigious Abbey School in Tipperary as 'one of the best classical scholars for his age'.[1] Finn was keen to tutor the rising generation in Latin and Greek, but the fledgling society of Melbourne was not quite ready for this educated man.

After a brief stint as a classics tutor, he worked as a clerk in an auction house before becoming a journalist where he found his metier. Four years after his arrival Finn was offered a position as reporter by George Cavenagh, editor and proprietor of the *Port Phillip Herald*. Cavenagh had established the *Herald* under the masthead 'Impartial, not Neutral', a motto Finn later described as 'probably the most difficult in the Anglo-Saxon tongue for a newspaper to rigidly work up to'.[2] Certainly regarding Charles La Trobe, the colonial papers were generally neither impartial nor neutral.

Finn worked for thirteen years for the *Port Phillip Herald*, recording the everyday lives and significant events in colonial Melbourne. As he later wrote, he was 'a spectator of almost everything that went on, whether the burning of a house or the founding of a church, a mayor-making or a prize fight, a charity sermon or an execution, a public dinner or a corroboree. I was a participator in, or an observer of, nine-tenths of them'.[3]

In 1875 he wrote a series of articles titled 'Reminiscences of Ancient Melbourne', which was serialised in the *Herald*. As Finn explained, 'I took it into my head to ascertain whether my head and pen had gone out of practice through

literary disuse... I fancied I could scribble still, even better than ever'. He described in detail his impressions of Melbourne at the time of his arrival, and, for example, wrote that on his second day after landing, he saw 'His Honor Charles Joseph La Trobe, the highest personage in the land, riding home from his office on Batman's Hill to his residence at Jolimont'. Finn continued, somewhat perceptively:

> He was the Superintendent of the colony, and was supposed to maintain his state and dignity on a stipend of £800 a year. Though a sort of Acting-Governor, he was in reality nothing more than a permanent head of a department, under the most stringent instructions from headquarters at Sydney. Though expected to do almost everything that might be asked, he was powerless except to recommend, and the result was that his false position rendered his berth no 'bed of roses'.

In course of time, he came to be the best abused man amongst us, and the truculence and cowardice with which he was treated by some of the newspapers was unpardonable. He was a man of cultivated mind, and kind heart, and his abilities were considerable; but he never had a fair scope for their exercise...[4]

Drawing on this series of articles, his cache of newspaper reports, his diaries, and the recollections and memoirs of fellow colonists, Finn first wrote *The Garryowen Sketches*, published in 1880. He expanded the articles to the two-volume, 1,000 page and sixty-eight chapter, *The Chronicles of Early Melbourne,* published eight years later and widely reprinted.[5] Finn's *Chronicles* are often quoted and the work is regarded as the authority on the early years of Melbourne.

By 1888 when *Chronicles* were published under Finn's pen-name 'Garryowen', memories of the early years were fading. Writing with intelligence, curiosity and flair, Finn has given us lively and detailed recollections of the early years. His accounts are drawn upon frequently by historians, but there has been little scholarship about the man himself and no biography published of his life. I am in the very early stages of evaluating Finn's writings, as the basis for a biography of this remarkable and complex man.

In his works, Finn emphasises the origins of Melbourne's immigrant community and their various religious, Masonic and sectarian affiliations. Often using satire and parody, his delightfully colourful and realistic vignettes cleverly situate readers in the mire of frontier life and the inhabitants' desire to establish a civil society. Finn knew virtually everyone in Melbourne in those years: Sir Charles Gavan Duffy (who inspired Finn to write the newspaper articles about life in early Melbourne on which the *Chronicles* were based); John Pascoe Fawkner (Finn's nemesis and sometime friend); businessman J.B. Were (sponsor of the Finn family's emigration to Melbourne); Robert Russell and Robert Hoddle (who both informed Finn's writings about Melbourne in the years before his arrival in 1841); and described his boss, George Cavenagh as 'fussy and in appearance energetic, had not much backbone… utterly insincere, figuratively as hollow as "the big drum"'.[6]

Keen to get his facts correct and expand his information on early Melbourne, Finn wrote to various people for information, including actor and entrepreneur, his friend George Coppin, Archbishop James Goold, Bishop Patrick Bonaventure Geoghegan and Father John Joseph Therry, pastoralist Niel Black and many others, including the former government printer, John Ferres. As Finn explained to Ferres, 'I am amusing myself in writing a book on the Reminiscences of Early Melbourne and I should not like to omit the infancy or baby-hood of the Government Printing Office'. He asked Ferres for details of 'its beginning and its early difficulties at the Old Government Office Reserve, and some particulars of the native place &c of the redoubted John Ferres… and any other exploits of his worthy of immortality'.[7] Ferres' response can be read in full in the *Chronicles*.

With the sub-title 'Historical, anecdotal and personal', the *Chronicles* are Finn's determined attempt to capture a lost world. By this time Melbourne was 'marvellous', one of the world's richest and largest cities, far different from the embryonic settlement founded fifty years earlier. The year 1888, when *Chronicles* were first published, was the centenary of white settlement and for many artists and writers it was a time of nostalgia. They saw the importance of recording the early, lost years. And so Frederick McCubbin painted *Melbourne, 1888*, which gives an insight into the great industry and activity of Melbourne in the 1880s, a marked contrast to *The North Wind*, also painted that year, which depicts a selector dragging his family into the bush.

Similarly, Tom Roberts conceived his grand history, *Shearing the Rams,* which he created at the same time Banjo Paterson published *Clancy of the Overflow* and *The Man from Snowy River*. A sense of collective myth-making pervaded the

Frederick McCubbin, 1855-1917, artist
The north wind, 1888
Oil on canvas on plywood
National Gallery of Victoria, 1119-4

era and Australian artists and writers wanted to capture the essence of the early years before they were lost forever, like Alexander Sutherland's *Victoria and its Metropolis*, or Leavitt and Lilburn's *Jubilee History of Victoria and Melbourne*, both published as two volumes in 1888.

But it is Finn's *Chronicles* which have captured the public's imagination. As a consummate journalist and with a deft use of media, Finn recorded the tribulations of life in a frontier town, the change to a progressive provincial city, the jubilation of Separation, the explosion in population following the gold discoveries, the complexities of establishing government infrastructure and so much more. Finn was alive to the humour and energies of life in the fledgling settlement and his observations are very sharp.

The 1880s were a time of fostering a sense of nationalism in the build-up to Federation. It was a time to show how far the colony had progressed; but where artists romanticised an idealised past, by contrast, Finn's work was a rare first-hand account of the early years of Melbourne. He recorded the everyday lives of the inhabitants and significant events with wit and humour. As the subtitle of *Chronicles* states, he set down historical, anecdotal and personal recollections — he was not writing a definitive history of early Melbourne, but he wanted to give a flavour of it. This can also be seen in his use of his pseudonym, 'Garryowen'. It was not Finn writing as an historian, but the journalist Finn, collecting the lesser-known stories to entertain and inform.

As a Tipperary-born man, Finn's choice of a name with Limerick associations requires some untangling. The name 'Garryowen' became a synonym for courage and resistance among the Irish troops who were defending the city during the Williamite siege at the end of the seventeenth century. It recalls the lawless adolescents of Limerick's suburb of the same name and the roistering military song published in 1775. With increasing numbers of Irish emigrating to America, the tune 'Garryowen' crossed the Atlantic and was used by Irish troops on both sides of the Civil War. It became the march of the Sixty-Ninth Regiment, immortalised in a film starring James Cagney, *The Fighting Sixty-Ninth*.

The name is often featured in the lexicon of Ireland, including Gerald Griffin's *The Collegians: a tale of Garryowen* published in 1829 which was based on a trial in Limerick ten years earlier, in the year of Finn's birth. Griffin, a journalist (and later educator), reported on the trial in which Daniel ('The Liberator') O'Connell acted as barrister for the defence. This event also gave rise the Irish play, *The Colleen Bawn: or The Brides of Garryowen*, by Dion Boucicault in 1860.[8] Thirty years after Finn's *Chronicles* were published, James Joyce coincidentally used 'Garryowen' as the name for a dog in *Ulysses*, transforming its thirst into a species (or parody) of Gaelic poetry, just as Finn transformed fragments of colonial stories into popular vernacular social history.

More recently, although forty years after Finn adopted this nom de plume, the term 'garryowen' has been used in rugby union, not

only for the name of the popular Limerick team, but for the action of a player kicking a ball into the air, chasing and then catching it. One can see an analogy to Finn throwing his thoughts into the air, chasing them to see where they would take him, and turning these thoughts into his recollections.

Finn's essay, 'Garryowen: what it means and who he is', enlightens us about his choice of pseudonym.[9] Finn refers to the 'Owen's Garden' of old, and Griffin's 'beautiful novel', but he mainly drew his inspiration from the military song. Although he denounced the lyrics as 'Larrikin doggerel', in Finn's words this 'thrilling Irish air' had been 'wandering wordless for centuries through the music and traditions of the Irish people' and he adopted the name 'Garryowen' for its associations as an 'ultra-Rebel tune of the Catholic party of the South'. Writing in the third person, he concluded his essay by stating that he was:

> Irish of the most pronounced type—not only in 'the back-bone and spinal marrow', but longitudinally, latitudinally, diametrically, diagonally, literally or figuratively, or any other way it is capable of being described… but despite all this, now that he has planted his standard beneath the stars of the Southern Cross, he clings to the land of his adoption, and his motto is 'Victoria first and every other place after'.

Indeed, Finn brought his cultural and aesthetic sensibilities to Melbourne. Through his writings and presidency of the St Patrick's Society,[10] Finn contributed to the strong Irish Catholic cultural network conducted under the patronage of Archbishop James Goold, and the endurance of the Hiberno-Roman Catholic identity in Melbourne. Formed in 1842 with the aim of educating the children of Irish descent, one of the first acts of the newly-formed St Patrick's Society was to call a meeting to protest against the anti-Irish way the Immigration Fund was being expended.

Finn was also one of the first members of the South Melbourne branch of the St Patrick's Society, joining the day it was established in January 1859 with the three-fold aims of cherishing Irish patriotism, the education of children of Irish descent and the promotion of the peace, honour and happiness of Victoria.[11]

Finn and Sir John O'Shanassy[12] worked closely together to further the purposes of the St Patrick's Society, Finn often giving lectures as fund-raisers. They had known each other back in Tipperary, having attended the same hedge school,[13] but there the similarities ended. While Finn continued his education, O'Shanassy left school early due to the death of his father, married early and migrated to Melbourne two years before Finn. Finn later described how he was walking around Melbourne on the day of his arrival and met O'Shanassy who 'adopted' him until Finn could obtain employment. Although very different in many ways: personality, build, intellect, they became close friends.

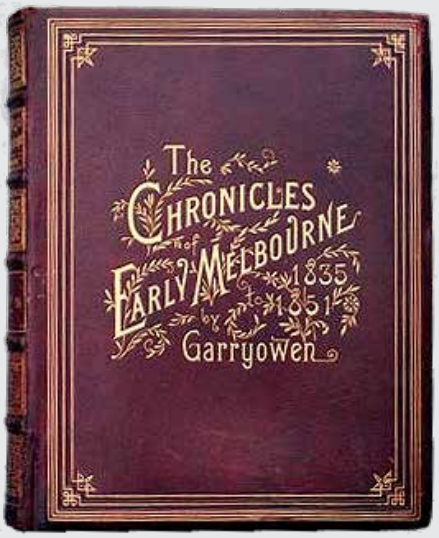
The year before his *Chronicles* were published, *Table Talk* included a small portrait of Finn describing him as 'the political tutor of Sir John O'Shanassy and the trusted advisor of the Irish party. He was liked as much for his social qualities as he was respected for his shrewd judgment and superior education'.[14]

Other commentators were not so impressed with Finn, one correspondent to the *Argus* describing him as a 'pygmy reporter' with 'diminutive faculties', a 'liliputian scribe' with a 'vapidness of… intellect' who was the 'little scheming puppet' of the rising politician John O'Shanassy. Others described them as the 'Irish bear and the pigmy Celt' or the 'Bulldog and the monkey'.[15] Sectarianism was well and truly alive at the time, an issue which at times tested Superintendent La Trobe, but Finn thought La Trobe dealt with the religious differences with equanimity. Finn arrived in Melbourne two years after La Trobe whom he described as:

> a travelled and accomplished gentleman, and, though nothing of an orator, was an agreeable writer, of much culture, and no inconsiderable ability... He was a thoroughly conscientious and honest man, who felt a sincere interest in the welfare of the colony, and always endeavoured to do right under difficulties of no ordinary kind.[16]

Finn's boss, George Cavenagh, was similarly fair-minded about La Trobe writing a long editorial 'Our First Governor' which acknowledged La Trobe's fallibility, but sought to do him justice.[17] Cavenagh's view, however, was not shared by his fellow newspaper proprietors, particularly by Edward Wilson of *The Argus*, nor by many leading colonists, the complaints comprehensively detailed by John Barnes in his biography of La Trobe.[18]

Finn worked at the *Port Phillip Herald* until June 1858, by which time the name of the paper had changed to the *Melbourne Morning Herald* and today is named the *Herald Sun*.[19] Through the influence of O'Shanassy, Finn became the Clerk



The Chronicles of early Melbourne, 1835 to 1851, by 'Garryowen', first published 1888
Rare Books Collection, State Library Victoria

of Papers of the Legislative Council of Victoria, a position he was forced to leave nearly thirty years later, in May 1886, due to impending blindness.

In both his roles as journalist and clerk, Finn was able to observe La Trobe and the various reactions to his stewardship of the colony. La Trobe's role was not easy, dealing with a huge increase in population, and in deliberating on questions of transportation, government authority and Separation from New South Wales.

During La Trobe's years, the population of Melbourne exploded from around 3,000 at the time of his arrival, to approximately 29,000 in 1851 at the time of Separation,[20] to 82,000 three years later at the time of his departure.[21] Melbourne at the time of La Trobe's arrival was a frontier town and, as Dianne Reilly has reminded us, 'Those who lived there had just one major preoccupation — to improve their material lot in life'. It was a very difficult posting for this cultured man who considered that religion and morality should be central pillars to the future success of the new community.[22]

Like most residents of the fledgling settlement, Finn resented the fact that La Trobe was answerable to the Governor of New South Wales, describing La Trobe as 'little more than a senior clerk, tied up with red tape, with hardly more to do than to receive and answer correspondence from headquarters, and report progress'.[23] While acknowledging that this description 'overstates the limitations' of La Trobe's powers, Barnes concedes that this view 'reflects accurately… the frustration felt by Port Phillipers, who had been hoping for a champion to push their interests'.

However, as Professor Shaw reminded us:

> Neither Gipps nor La Trobe liked the connection, and as the latter wrote in 1844, it had been a 'misfortune' that the two parts of the colony [of New South Wales] had not been separated when the Superintendency had been established. Port Phillip had never gained any advantage and had often been injured by it.[24]

The Colonial Office clearly took a conservative approach when appointing La Trobe to the superintendency. He had no previous administrative experience and had been appointed on the strength of his colonial reports on the West Indies.

Finn acknowledged the difficulties inherent in La Trobe's position, but concluded, 'His chief fault was an unsteadfastness of disposition and a good nature which forced him at times to say 'yes' instead of 'no''.[25] And therein, it seems, lay La Trobe's main problem. The colonial press became increasingly critical of him, especially on the question of land settlement. As William Westgarth has written about Edward Wilson, chief proprietor of *The Argus:*

> He had a great antipathy to indecision in public men, and he entered upon a furious crusade against the Superintendent and his surroundings, as the prime causes in the delay in 'the unlocking of the lands'. Mr La Trobe was dubbed 'the Hat and Feathers' as though these trappings were the most of him; … Mr La Trobe, if affected at all, was only encouraged or scared into still more decided indecision.[26]

Finn, however, took a more balanced view, writing of La Trobe that: 'he was repeatedly accused of partisanship in the interest of the squatters, though in reality he was the reverse'. Finn noted that 'He was an ardent promoter of every movement, tending to benefit the Province, and his services in resisting the introduction of transportation, were of incalculable value in bringing the agitation on that question to a successful issue'.[27]

However, it was on the question of Separation that La Trobe invoked the most ire. In his inimitable style, Finn identified the story of Separation as being the most important

'histororiette' in the *Chronicles,* the most 'persistent and anxiously-agitated struggle for the territorial severance of Port Phillip from New South Wales, and its provincial transformation to the independent colony of Victoria'.

The colonists of Port Phillip had pushed for separation from the beginning of the establishment of the District. As early as May 1840, some activists held their first meeting for Separation at the Scots' School on Eastern, or as it was then called, Church Hill. They followed up in December that year with a public meeting. But the matter lapsed for four years, a time Finn described as 'an incubus, of which everyone was tired and were longing to shake off'. The passion of a further meeting, held in March 1844, is reflected in Barrister Cuninghame's florid speech in which he proclaimed:

> Till separation be obtained we can, at best, but float like a dis-masted and deserted hulk on the surface of the water, without captain to direct, without sails to impel, without helmsman to guide us, floating… aimless and objectless. Separation will be to us at once captain and helmsman, wind and sail.[28]

It was to be a long, slow process to self-determination and La Trobe accepted progress in this way. As Dianne Reilly has indicated in her study of La Trobe: 'His character predisposed him to gradual, orderly change; it was easy for the colonists at the time to interpret his gradualism as lethargy'.[29] But there was more to the colonists' frustration than the issue of indecision or lethargy when it became known that La Trobe had written to the Secretary of State in London expressing his view that 'Port Phillip was not yet sufficiently ripe to be intrusted with the privilege of self-governing institutions'.[30] For this action, Finn wrote that 'for his temerity in doing so', La Trobe:

> was severely brought to book by the press of the day; and had a hauling over the coals in the city Council… There was an overwhelming majority of the public against him on this point; and yet there were a few cool heads and active minds, disposed to believe that the unpopular opinion so expressed was not, by any means, so unjustified as the masses were disposed to think.[31]

Finn incidentally reveals in this remark how influential the press was – even before the creation of the State of Victoria. As early as the first municipal elections in 1842, Finn observed that the half-dozen newspaper proprietors, editors and assistants 'took an active part in public affairs', although Finn attributed this to the ulterior motive of some for election to the Corporation of Melbourne.[32]


V R
THE MELBOURNE
MORNING HERALD
EXTRAORDINARY.
GLORIOUS NEWS!
SEPARATION
AT LAST!!
SEPARATION HAS COME AT LAST!!
The Australian Colonies' Bill,
WAS AGREED TO IN THE COMMONS ON THE 1ST AUG.,
THE LAW OF THE LAND.
INDEPENDENT COLONY.
GENERAL JUBILEE.
New-born Colony!
God Bless the Queen!!!

Glorious News! Separation at last! The Melbourne Morning Herald extraordinary, 11 November 1850
Poster
Pictures Collection, State Library Victoria, H38464

Finn tells us that in July 1848, the mayor convened another public meeting, this time with the purpose of sending a petition to Queen Victoria. They had lost confidence in La Trobe and appealed to the throne to remove him. La Trobe was accused of wasting public money, favouring some settlers over others; of allowing an official to accept bribes and being obsequious by 'playing second fiddle' to Sir George Gipps when he visited Melbourne.[33] The petition was officially acknowledged by Downing Street, but not granted. Just over two years later, on 11 November 1850, the people of Melbourne received the welcome news that the British Parliament had passed legislation granting the Separation of the district from New South Wales. As Tim Hogan has noted, 'It was a colonial-era version of Brexit'.[34]

Finn was one of the first to learn the news. He had taken delivery of some South Australian newspapers which had recently arrived via ship from Adelaide. In them he noticed a small summary of news from England which noted the passing of the Separation legislation in both Houses of the British Parliament. Finn immediately organised the printing of a *Melbourne*

Commemoration of the boon of Separation of the province of Victoria from the Colony of New South Wales, Melbourne, the fifteenth November 1850
Broadside, written by John Pascoe Fawkner
'Printed in the line of the Procession to open the Princes Bridge'
May be viewed at https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-342226734.

Morning Herald 'Extraordinary' with the 'Glorious News — Separation at last'.[35] Eight days later, the *Herald* reprinted a broadside,[36] written by John Pascoe Fawkner which enumerated the history of Victoria, listed all the newspapers published in the colony and claimed: 'This Press and the People have achieved that consummation so devoutly to be wished, viz., SEPARATION—Total Separation from New South Wales'.[37] It was widely distributed during the Printers' Festival held 14-16 November, including during the grand procession to witness the opening of Prince's Bridge on 15 November.[38]

As noted more recently, the print media, including newspapers, journals, letters and public documents, quickly became the voice of the Victorian agenda and the communications medium for political exchange of ideas and debates.[39] The press certainly saw themselves this way as their broadside proclaimed:

> In this cause the Press has been ever active, and has nobly performed the duty entrusted thereto. Justice has at length triumphed! Victoria is freed from the clog of the Elder Colony of New South Wales! Her people rejoice as one man. The Printers, and all employed on the diffusion of the printed page: all engaged on the all-powerful Press, join heart and soul in the People's joy.[40]

Word quickly spread about the 'glorious news' and the long-anticipated celebrations began, Finn's diary providing a vivid description of the colonists' joy at finally achieving Separation. On 12 November a royal salute witnessed by about 300 people was fired from Flagstaff Hill and the following evening saw a display of fireworks on a scale never seen before in the colonies. Three days of general holidays were then observed.

The colonists' celebrations were a little premature, however, as although the Separation Bill had been signed by Queen Victoria on 5 August 1850, legislation enabling Separation was not passed by the New South Wales Legislative Council until the following year on 1 July 1851. But the colonists were not to be deterred and Finn records that they celebrated the British Act of Parliament by lighting beacons, which were delightfully depicted by Liardet. However, soon afterwards in the chaos of the goldrush, La Trobe had lost the confidence of the people who had been stirred up heavily by the press. Dispirited, in December 1852, he sent his resignation to the Secretary of State, and was finally able to depart sixteen months later in May 1854 after nearly three years as Lieutenant-Governor of the Colony of Victoria.[41]

Finn was to live another forty-four years, dying in 1898. He has been recognised by the

Wilbraham Frederick Evelyn Liardet, 1799-1878, artist
Separation celebrations on Flagstaff Hill (1850), 1875
Watercolour with pen and ink, gouache and pencil
Pictures Collection, State Library Victoria, H28250/37

Melbourne Press Club's Australian Media Hall of Fame, his notation reading: '*The Argus* said in 1944 that more details are known about the beginnings of Melbourne than of most large cities, ancient or modern, [because of one man] Edmund Finn'.[42] This tribute encapsulates the enduring legacy of Finn. In Melbourne we are fortunate to have his *Chronicles* as it is rare for any city to have such a detailed record of its foundation and early years.

Endnotes

1 *Melbourne Punch*, 16 August 1888, p.16, 'Old Identities'.

2 Garryowen, 'The Residential Changes of "The Herald"', *Herald*, 26 July 1886, p.3.

3 Garryowen, C*hronicles of Early Melbourne, 1835 to 1852: historical, anecdotal and personal*, Melbourne: Fergusson and Mitchell, 1888, p.vii.

4 Edmund Finn, Reminiscences of Ancient Melbourne, Manuscripts Collection, State Library Victoria, MS 13258.

5 See also Facsimile edition, with a descriptive index by Neil Swift, Melbourne: Heritage Publications, 1976, 3 vols.

6 Garryowen, *Chronicles*, pp.834, 650.

7 Finn to Ferres, 18 June 1880, Manuscripts Collection, State Library of New South Wales, AF45.

8 Tom Roberts painted a portrait of Dion Boucicault's son, who carried the same name. It belongs to the Tallis Foundation of Beleura House and Garden, Mornington, and is on long-term loan to the National Portrait Gallery in Canberra, www.portrait.gov.au/portraits/LOAN2008.27/dion-g-boucicault (accessed 31 July 2019).

9 *Herald*, 22 December 1879, p.2; see also Garryowen, *Chronicles*, pp.995-997.

10 Edmund Finn, *St. Patrick's Societies: their principles and purposes, a lecture delivered… 1 November 1860*, Melbourne: [St. Patrick's Society]. 1860.

11 Edmund Finn's membership card, St Patrick's, Society, South Melbourne, No.17, 14 January 1859, Manuscripts Collection, State Library Victoria, MS 12821.

12 John O'Shanassy arrived in Melbourne 1839, was three-time Premier of Victoria between the years 1857 to 1863, and was knighted 1870.

13 A small, often illegal, school, particularly in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Ireland, designed to provide rudimentary education to Catholic children.

14 *Table Talk*, 10 January 1896, p.4.

15 *Argus*, 5 November 1847, p.4; Garryowen, Reminiscences of Sir John O'Shanassy, Finn papers, Manuscripts Collection, State Library Victoria, MS 13258.

16 Garryowen, *Chronicles*, p.41.

17 *Melbourne Morning Herald*, 14 November 1850, p.4.

18 John Barnes, *La Trobe: Traveller, Writer, Governor*, Canberra: Halstead Press, in association with State Library Victoria and La Trobe University, 2017.

19 Garryowen, *Chronicles*, p.834.

20 Figures for City of Melbourne and surrounding area from Peter McDonald, 'Demography'. *eMelbourne: the city past & present* (accessed online 4 August 2019).

21 City of Melbourne and surrounding area, *Census of Victoria, 1854*: Population tables, 26 April 1854, p.16.

22 Dianne Reilly, 'Books and Culture in La Trobe's Melbourne', *La Trobeana*, vol.12, no.3, November 2013, p.8.

23 Garryowen, *Chronicles*, p.42, quoted by Barnes, p.162.

24 A.G.L. Shaw, 'C.J. La Trobe: Victoria's first Lieutenant-Governor', *La Trobe and His Circle*, Melbourne: State Library of Victoria, 1989, p.11. (Reprinted *Victorian Historical Journal*, vol.61, 1990, pp.19-20.).

25 Garryowen, *Chronicles*, p.41.

26 William Westgarth, *Personal Recollections of Early Melbourne and Victoria*, Melbourne: George Robertson & Company, 1888 (facsimile edition, 1970), pp.98-99.

27 Garryowen, *Chronicles*, p.41.

28 Ibid, p.907.

29 Dianne Reilly Drury, *La Trobe: the Making of a Governor*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2006, pp.204-205.

30 Garryowen, *Chronicles*, p.296.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid, pp.260-261.

33 Ibid, p.344.

34 Tim Hogan, 'Glorious news! Separation at last!'. Weblog State Library Victoria, entry posted 5 July 2016, https://blogs.slv.vic.gov.au/such-was-life/glorious-news-separation-at-last (accessed 10 April 2019). See also, Tim Hogan, 'Resplendent Lights of Publicity and Despicable Journals: the early newspapers of the Port Phillip District', L*a Trobeana*, vol.10, no.2, June 2011, pp.35-40.

35 Finn's diary, 11 and 12 November 1850, Manuscripts Collection, State Library Victoria, MS 12821; *Melbourne Morning Herald*, 12 November 1850, p.1.

36 A large sheet of paper printed on one side only, used as a poster announcing an event or proclamation, or as commentary. This one measures 37cm.

37 *Melbourne Morning Herald*, 19 November 1850, p.1.

38 Finn's diary, 11-15 November 1850, Manuscripts Collection, State Library Victoria, MS 12821.

39 Stewart McArthur quoted in foreword, Gary Morgan, W*omen, the Media and People from Other Countries who have made Victoria: 1851 to today*, [New ed., Melbourne: Roy Morgan Research Centre Pty Ltd, 2011], p.4.

40 'Commemoration of the boon of Separation of the province of Victoria from the Colony of New South Wales, Melbourne, the fifteenth November 1850', written by John Pascoe Fawkner, reprinted *Melbourne Morning Herald*, 19 November 1850, p.1, Finn Family papers: scrapbook, Manuscripts Collection, State Library Victoria, MS 12821.

41 Reilly Drury, p.229. Barnes, p.302.

42 Phillip Abson, 'Garryowen: chronicler of early Melbourne', *Argus*, 30 December 1944, p.7.

The Life of William Henry Foster in Victoria

By Tim Gatehouse

Tim Gatehouse is a retired solicitor with interests in the history of pre-goldrush Victoria, architecture, gardening and libraries. His articles on these subjects have appeared in various journals. His interest in Charles Joseph La Trobe and connections with the Foster family stems from American ancestors his family shares with the La Trobes.

This paper is derived from the Sunday Talks for Members program, 16 June 2019.

This is the second part of a two-part article on William Henry Foster (1832-1894), a cousin once removed of Charles La Trobe. The first part appeared in the previous issue of *La Trobeana*.[1] That article included an account of Foster's life up to October 1851, when he was aboard the ship *Medway*, bound for Melbourne, having been ordered by his father, Judge John Frederick Foster, to leave England after committing a youthful misdemeanor which in his father's eyes disgraced the family.

Port Phillip was probably chosen as Foster's place of exile because of the family connection with Charles La Trobe, the Superintendent of the Port Phillip District. In 1851, when Port Phillip was separated from New South Wales, La Trobe became the first Lieutenant-Governor of the newly-created colony of Victoria. Although his father had given Foster a letter of introduction to La Trobe, he had not seen him since he was a child and must have been uncertain of his reception. However, La Trobe put a high value on family relationships, and warmly received his young relative.[2] Foster became a frequent visitor to *Jolimont*, commenting in his letters home on the modest size of the house, and the interesting native plants in the garden, about which La Trobe was so enthusiastic.

La Trobe arranged for Foster to enter the Mounted Police as a cadet officer, but until he attained the requisite age of twenty, found him a place on his personal staff. The Mounted Police was established by La Trobe in February 1852 in response to the threatened collapse of law and order following the discovery of gold in 1851. In December of that year there were only forty-four soldiers in Victoria, later reinforced by thirty from New South Wales, but these were by no means sufficient to guard the gold escorts, powder magazines and the Melbourne gaol, as well as keep order on the goldfields. The Mounted Police initially comprised twelve officers and 250 troopers.[3] They were first commanded by William Mair, but from January 1853 by William Henry Fancourt Mitchell.[4]

Many of the cadets were the younger sons of families in the English gentry who had come to the colony with idealised notions of life in the bush, or, like Foster, to escape their past. Amongst them was Frederick Standish (1824-1883) the bankrupt scion of a landed family in Lancashire,[5] Francis Augustus Hare (1830-1892) one of the seventeen children of an army officer and farmer in the Cape Colony,[6] and John Sadleir (1833-1919) the son of an Irish landowner.[7] All were destined in later life to hold senior positions in the police force, Standish as Chief Commissioner. In later life Sadleir described the cadets as 'nice, well-bred fellows for the most part, and of various callings... barristers, attorneys, ex-bank managers, medical students'.[8]

There was however considerable resentment amongst the troopers and officers who had risen through the ranks against cadets like Foster who had obtained their appointments through family connections or influence other

than merit. The arrogance and unconcealed contempt of many of the officers for the miners made them unpopular on the diggings as well. That Foster shared this attitude is shown by his reference to some officers who 'didn't have any social standing'.[9]

After six weeks' training at the Police Camp at Richmond, Foster was gazetted as a cadet on 21 January 1853.[10] His first appointment was to the Ovens District Gold Escort. This entailed guarding the gold consignments brought from Beechworth to the Treasury in Melbourne, and the apprehension of bushrangers. Although after six months he was given command of the escort, and subsequently that of the McIvor District near Heathcote, he did not receive the promotion to lieutenant which he considered his responsibilities merited.

This did not occur until his next appointment as officer-in-charge of the police station at Maiden's Punt on the Murray River. Although La Trobe's influence had been instrumental in gaining Foster's initial entry into the Mounted Police, it was counter-productive to his further advancement. As he later discovered, the Police Commissioner William Henry Fancourt Mitchell held back his promotion until after Charles La Trobe's departure from the colony in order to prevent further allegations of family influence. The small settlement of Maiden's Punt was the forerunner of Echuca. When Foster and the six troopers under his command arrived in March 1854, the recently-built barracks and stables in the police paddock had not even been furnished or equipped. Despite his gratification on receiving his long-sought promotion to lieutenant and later senior lieutenant, time hung heavily on Foster's hands. He was therefore delighted to receive his next appointment as a Commissioner of Crown Lands for the Goldfields at Ballarat on 6 July 1854.[11]

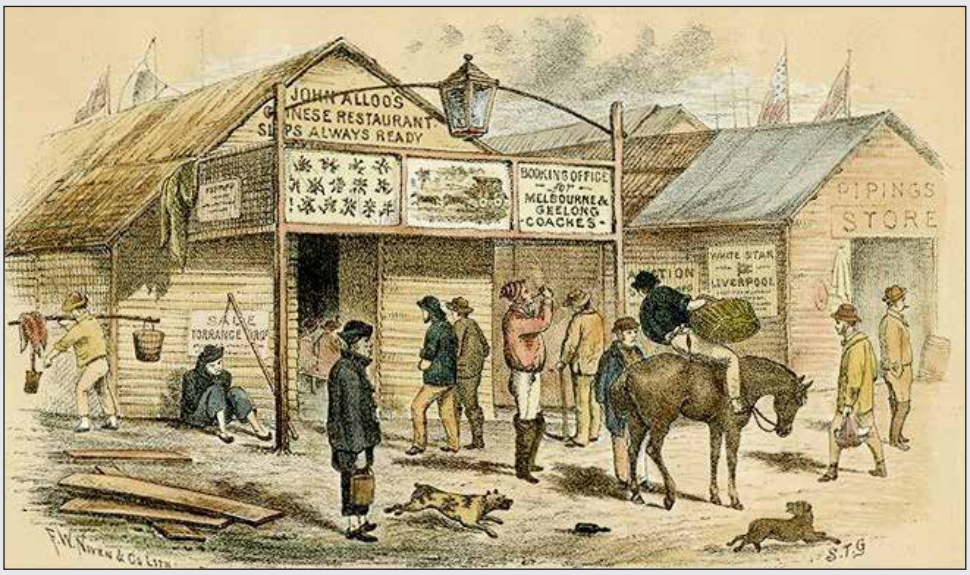
In later years Foster stated that his love for Ballarat was born on the day he rode into the Police Camp to report for duty and lasted for the rest of his life. His first posting was to Smythe's Creek (Smythesdale), 12 miles (19 km) south-west of Ballarat, from where he supervised goldfields as distant as Fiery Creek (Beaufort). His salary of £350 per annum and £80 for forage was ample for his needs, although the only accommodation was a tent.

Foster had little sympathy for the grievances of the miners, seeing nothing unreasonable in the levying of the licence fee, which he regarded as a fair price to pay for the maintenance of law and order. He felt that the agitation which culminated in the storming of the Eureka Stockade could have been averted if the government had taken more rigorous measures at the outset. This view was a reflection of his own background in the gentry and the generally contemptuous attitude of the police officers to the diggers. On one occasion Foster had to disperse a mob that threatened to burn his camp at Smythe's Creek. As a demonstration of his support for the government's measures, he joined the other commissioners and magistrates at the Police Camp at Ballarat on the eve of the storming of the stockade.

Unknown photographer
William Henry Foster, c.1875
Courtesy Andrew Foster

In the reorganisation of the goldfields after Eureka, the licence fee was abolished, and with it the office of Commissioner, which had been largely concerned with the collection of the fees. This role was replaced by that of Goldfields Warden, whose main function was the settlement of disputes between miners. Foster was initially appointed Warden at Creswick's Creek (Creswick) a few miles north of Ballarat, but this position was soon augmented by another more onerous position—one of the newly-created Protectors of Chinese.

By 1855 the increasing number of Chinese miners on the goldfields was causing concern to the government, mainly due to the outbreaks of violence between them and European miners. Long before the gold discoveries, Chinese residents had been present in the Australian colonies in roles ranging from merchants to domestic servants and contract labourers. After the gold discoveries their numbers increased dramatically, most coming from Guandong



Samuel Thomas Gill, 1818-1880, artist
F.W. Niven & Co, Ballarat, lithographer
John Alloo's Chinese restaurant, Main Road, Ballaarat [*sic*], 1853
Colour lithograph
Art Gallery of Ballarat, 2004.107

Province in southern China, where civil unrest encouraged many to leave. As their presence grew in Victoria, so did the hostility from European residents. The linguistic and cultural gulfs, exacerbated by an underlying xenophobia and fear of a Chinese uprising, led to frequent outbreaks of violence. In many instances Chinese were driven off rich claims by force.[12]

The Treaty of Nanjing, which ended the 1839-1842 war between Britain and China, guaranteed reciprocal rights of security and protection in each other's territories of British and Chinese subjects. The British government was anxious not to give the Chinese government any excuse for abrogating the profitable trading arrangements facilitated by the treaty and consequently refused to countenance any legislation that prohibited Chinese immigration to Victoria. Although it could not stop immigration, in 1855 the Victorian Government tried to stem the flow by passing the Immigration Restriction Act by which a £10 poll tax was imposed on all passengers landed from China, and limiting the number of passengers to be carried on ships, making the trade less profitable.[13] To evade the legislation many ships off-loaded their passengers at Robe in South Australia, from where they walked to the diggings.

While trying to stem the influx of future immigrants, the Victorian Government had to devise a means of dealing with those who were already here. The means adopted was the creation of a new branch of goldfields administration, the Chinese Protectorates.[14]The protectorates were the suggestion of the Commissioner of Goldfields at Bendigo, Joseph Anderson Panton (1831-1913), and were modelled on the earlier Aboriginal Protectorates. Panton had emigrated to Victoria from Scotland in 1851 and after farming on the property of his uncle, Colonel Joseph Anderson at Mangalore, had a brief stint at goldmining. In 1852 La Trobe appointed him Assistant Commissioner at Kangaroo Gully (Bendigo) and by 1854 he was Senior Commissioner at Bendigo.[15]

The protectorates were first established on the major goldfields at Ballarat, Bendigo and Beechworth. Under this system Chinese miners and other residents were required to live in specified areas where they were segregated from the European population and provided with police protection from the violence to which they were frequently subjected. The system was also designed to protect the European population from what was regarded as the sinister influence of the Chinese, in particular their opium smoking. Head men, interpreters and scribes, all paid by the government, were appointed for each village in the protectorate, the head men being answerable to the protector. The head men liaised with the protector, conveying the government's directions to the Chinese miners, and the miners' concerns to the protectors. In the event of disputes with Europeans, the protectors assisted and advised the Chinese as to their legal rights and provided

Andrew Foster, artist
Catherine Foster, née Paterson
Pen and ink sketch 1988 after photograph c.1875
Courtesy Andrew Foster

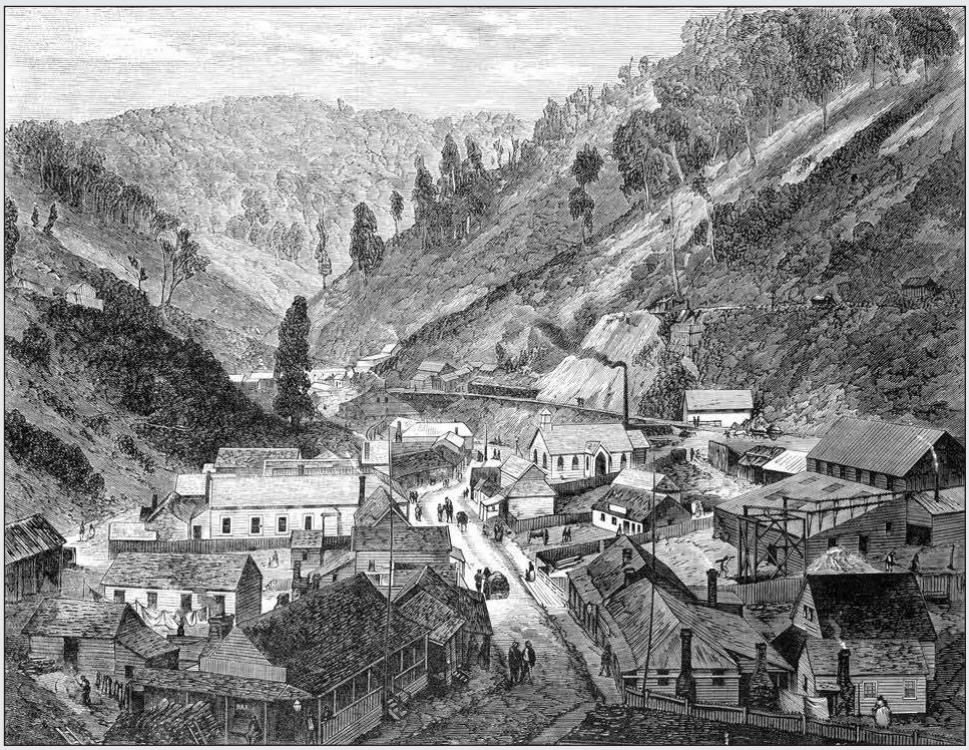
them with interpreters. They supervised the orderly layout of the villages, with particular regard to adequate sanitation, in an attempt to prevent recurring outbreaks of disease. The protectors were provided with detachments of police and interpreters to help them carry out their functions. To fund the protectorates the Chinese miners were required to pay a poll tax of £1 per annum, but this soon became as difficult to collect as had been the former licence fee.[16]

Foster was appointed Protector of Chinese at Ballarat on 1 September 1855, while continuing to hold the position as Resident Goldfields Warden. As a government official, Foster had to provide sureties for his good conduct. The names he submitted to the Chief Secretary were Paul de Castella and Frederic Guillaume de Pury,[17] two Swiss vignerons in the Yarra Valley to whom he must have been introduced by La Trobe. Like his fellow protector at Bendigo, Frederick Standish, Foster did not at first relish the role, his mounted police officer's attitude to miners in general being reinforced by the standard European prejudices against the Chinese. However, exchanging the sobriquet 'the boy commissioner' for 'Chinese Foster', he grew into the role, and gradually developed a genuine respect and affection for those whom in a letter to his father he termed his 'Chinese subjects'.[18]

Although now based in Ballarat, with a relatively generous annual salary of £750, Foster's initial accommodation was a tent in the Police Camp. In carrying out his duties as warden and protector Foster had to travel to Creswick, Fiery Creek, Linton, Smythe's Creek, Mount Egerton, Mount Misery (near Burrumbeet) and Clunes, which were between 12 and 30 miles (19 and 48 km) from Ballarat.[19] Amongst his duties were the issuing of protection tickets, the cost of which funded the Protectorate, settling mining disputes, assisting the Chinese miners at court hearings, inspecting the Chinese camps and supervising the headmen appointed to liaise between him and the Chinese miners.[20] Foster drew the plans for new camps as further goldfields were discovered, his major concern being the provision of adequate sanitation. In one instance he moved the entire camp at Golden Point at Ballarat to a new, more salubrious location.[21] Foster was assisted by an interpreter, a scribe, and a small detachment of police. The interpreter was in constant attendance on him, in the office, at court and accompanying him on circuit. The Chinese scribe was required to publish government regulations and the protector's orders. [22]

The arduous nature of Foster's responsibilities was exacerbated by the inefficiency of the government in providing the means for him to carry them out. His letters to the Chief Secretary contain constant complaints that the police detachment to which he was entitled was frequently assigned other duties, that the village headmen and interpreters had not been paid, that his own salary was in arrears 'causing considerable inconvenience'. Nor was there a proper office, furniture or law books. Like Charles La Trobe, he had to provide his own accommodation, a small cottage built at his own expense in the Police Camp, the land on which it was built he was later able to purchase.

The health of the Chinese miners was one of Foster's major concerns from the time of his appointment, and he initially arranged for doctors to make weekly visits to each camp. The poor sanitation of the camps, against which he waged a constant battle, was partly responsible, but the situation worsened after the imposition of the £10 poll tax. Many of the Chinese miners who landed in South Australia and trekked overland to Ballarat in order to evade the tax arrived malnourished and ill from exposure. Anti-Chinese prejudice was sufficiently strong to prevent them being treated in the same hospital wards as Europeans; therefore after being elected secretary of the Ballarat Hospital, Foster set out to raise money for a wing dedicated to Chinese patients. He persuaded the government to provide funding equal to the amount raised by subscription in the Chinese camps, and in due course the wing was built.[23] A reciprocal empathy gradually developed between Foster



Thomas S. Cousins, engraver
Township of Walhalla, Stringer's Creek, 1871
Wood engraving
Pictures Collection, State Library Victoria, IAN20/5/71/108
Published in The Illustrated Australian News for Home Readers

and the Chinese population. He grew to appreciate their company, festivals and food, and frequently dined at the restaurant owned by John Aloo, who was also his interpreter. On Foster's birthday he was honoured by a torchlight and firecracker procession around his house.

It was at the Ballarat Hospital Ball in January 1856 that Foster met his future wife, Catherine Paterson, whom he married on 2 September 1858. 'Catty' as she was known, was the daughter of Alexander Paterson, a Scottish solicitor who had emigrated to Van Diemen's Land in 1822, and his wife Agnes.[24] She and their only son died in 1834, leaving him with six daughters. In 1835 Alexander remarried, his second wife being Joanna Isabella MacLeod (known as Isabella). She was a daughter of Major Donald MacLeod VI of *Talisker* on the Isle of Skye. In 1820, having sold the *Talisker* estate, he too had emigrated to Van Diemen's Land, with his family and a number of his former tenants, and established a new *Talisker* near Launceston.[25]

Alexander had a further seven children with Isabella, of whom Catty was the first. The family moved between Van Diemen's Land, New South Wales and Victoria, as Alexander oscillated between practising his profession, holding an appointment as a Crown Lands Commissioner, and later establishing himself as a pastoralist in various locations. At the time of his death in 1856 the family was living at *Spring Burn Station* near Portland, but afterwards due to financial difficulties, Isabella and her children moved to *Borhoneyghurk Station* at Meredith near Geelong, owned by her brother John Norman MacLeod.[26]

The death of his father in 1858, following that of his sister in 1857, came as a severe blow to Foster, who never lost his love and respect for his father despite the harsh treatment that had led to his emigration. The two deaths prompted a wish to visit his remaining relatives in England; therefore, in March 1861, having obtained twelve months' leave, Foster and Catty and their two children, John Frederick and Isabella, embarked for England. Most of their time was spent visiting their families and old haunts in England and Scotland. They met Charles La Trobe in London, and later visited him at *Whitbourne Court* near Worcester. La Trobe had continued to interest himself in Foster's career after he left Victoria, recommending him to Bishop Perry and his friend Ronald Gunn in Tasmania. In London the travellers visited the studio of the portrait sculptor Matthew Noble, to

inspect progress on the marble bust of his father, and when in Oxford Foster visited Brasenose College, contemplating while there the kind of life he might have led had he not been exiled to Australia.

Foster returned to Victoria ahead of his family, so that Catty could give birth to their third child, Arthur, in England. Arriving in Melbourne in June 1862, Foster found to his great disappointment that he was not to be immediately reinstated in his previous posts at Ballarat, but was assigned for several months to the remote gold mining town of Omeo in East Gippsland, albeit with the promotion to Police Magistrate and Goldfields Warden. Here the accommodation, two rooms attached to the court house, was too primitive for Catty and their children to accompany him, so they returned for the time being to Catty's family home at *Borhoneyghurk*.[27]

At Omeo, Foster's duties took him to mining settlements as remote as Mount Wills and the Wonnangatta Valley, and on one occasion across the mountains to Beechworth. Dismayed as he had been by his appointment to Omeo, Foster made the most of his time there, enjoying the out-door pursuits which the remote location offered. He went shooting with the Police Sergeant, fished, played cricket and attended race meetings. But it was a great relief when he was re-appointed to Ballarat in October 1862, as Police Magistrate at East Ballarat, to be replaced at Omeo by the explorer and naturalist Alfred Howitt.

In Ballarat the Foster family enjoyed all the advantages the rich and growing city could offer, attending balls, the theatre and concerts. Foster resumed his interest in the hospital, being elected President in 1865, and when Lake Wendouree was created resumed his interest in rowing, which he had not practised since his student days at Oxford.

It was therefore with some disappointment that in June 1865 Foster learned that he was again to be transferred, this time to Sale, which was a far cry from the amenities of Ballarat and further still from those of Melbourne. Although it was the principal town in Gippsland, access by land was blocked by impenetrable scrub and swamps. From Melbourne it was necessary to travel by steamer to Port Albert and then by coach to Sale. At least here Foster was able to find a comfortable home for his family, *Mowbray Park*, a large weatherboard house on several acres, just outside the town.

Foster's circuit was extensive, covering an area of widely-varied topography. The grazing districts included Stratford, Maffra, Rosedale, Tarraville, Alberton, Stockyard Creek and Bairnsdale, a four-day return journey from Sale by sea. On one occasion Foster spent five days on the return journey from Sale to Stockyard Creek, by steamer, coach and on foot. Once there, he decided three cases, the hearings taking place in a tent on the landing by the creek. The mining settlements within his jurisdiction in the thickly-forested mountains included Donnelly's Creek, Bald Hills and Stringer's Creek, which, later renamed Walhalla, became the richest goldfield in Gippsland. These journeys could only be made on horseback over narrow packhorse tracks, regardless of the weather.

As at Ballarat, the Fosters took an active part in the social life of Sale. They were welcomed by neighbouring pastoralists William Pearson of *Kilmany Park*, Robert Thomson of *Clydebank*, and William Boyd Cunninghame of *The Fulton*, who married Catty's sister Marion. They joined the musical and dramatic societies, Foster fished, played cricket, went shooting and bought a boat to sail on the Gippsland Lakes. In summer the family camped on Ninety Mile Beach. On a trip to Melbourne, Foster greatly admired the Botanic Gardens, noting that they had been established by Charles La Trobe. They may have inspired him to plant, in the recently-established Botanic Gardens at Sale, the oak tree that he had grown from an acorn brought home from his father's grave in England. At a communal tree planting as part of the Queen's Birthday celebrations in 1872, he and his children gave it a permanent home after it had been transplanted several times at the various places in which they had lived.[28]

The public roles Foster fulfilled outside his official duties are an indication of the high regard in which he was held. He was elected President of the hospital, a position for which he was well qualified by his experience at the Ballarat hospital, and was chosen to organise the visit to Sale of the Governor, Lord Canterbury, in 1871. Later that year when visiting Stockyard Creek on circuit, the question of giving the settlement an official name was resolved by the residents' decision to name it Foster, despite his tactful suggestion that it be named after the Governor.

Foster's experience in mining law extended back to the earliest days of the goldrush, and his rulings earned him a reputation as an expert on the subject. While serving as Mining Warden at Ballarat he often found it necessary to personally inspect the shafts and tunnels to investigate claims of encroachment, where it was alleged that one miner had tunnelled into the claim of another.[29] Mining below the surface was then in its infancy, but such cases became

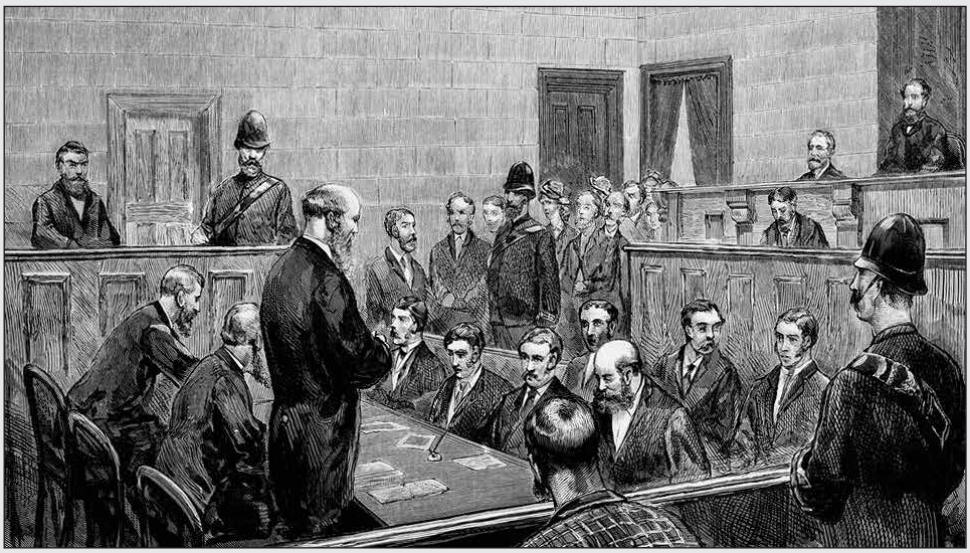
Kelvin Halsey, photographer
9 Williams Street, Beechworth (c.1864), 2019
Foster family residence for thirteen years from 1878.

far more complex by the time deep-reef mining developed. At Walhalla in 1868 Foster had to adjudicate a claim of encroachment brought by the Long Tunnel Mine against the neighbouring Wellesley Company.[30] Foster found in favour of the Long Tunnel. The fact that his brother-in-law, William Boyd Cunninghame, was one of its major shareholders apparently was not deemed to be an issue by Foster or either of the parties. Perhaps his reputation for fairness overcame any doubts as to his impartiality. Likewise in his administration of the criminal law, Foster's early authoritarian attitudes mellowed over the years, showing a marked reluctance to gaol women or young persons, if it could possibly be avoided. Having lived and worked in some of the most remote places in Victoria, he must have realised how hard some people's lives were.

The Fosters lived at Sale for thirteen years. During this time six of their ten children were born, and one, the ten-year-old Constance (Concie), died. Their next move in 1878 was brought about by a political crisis in the Victorian Government. In an attempt to force through legislation regarded by the conservative Legislative Council as too radical, the Premier, Graham Berry, had attached it to an appropriation bill, which authorised the payment of ordinary government expenses. The Legislative Council had no choice but to pass or reject the whole bill. When it rejected the bill, the government dismissed hundreds of public officials including Foster, on the grounds that there was no money with which to pay them. Although most were later reinstated, as an economy measure it was decided that Foster's circuit could be served by the magistrate sitting at Bairnsdale, Alfred Howitt, and Foster was assigned to Beechworth.[31]

While he made arrangements for the move to Beechworth, the rest of the family returned temporarily to Ballarat where their tenth and last child, Ursula, was born. At Beechworth, after the semi-rural seclusion of *Mowbray Park,* they had to adjust to life in the town, albeit in a substantial double-storey house with a large garden and orchard. The two oldest sons had already left home to pursue their own careers, Frederick as a mining surveyor and Arthur in banking. The younger sons attended Goldsworthy's Grammar School and the daughters the Ladies' Academy. Once again Foster and his family immersed themselves in the social life of their new home, supporting the hospital, the schools and the Church of England, and joining the musical and dramatic societies. Foster became the President of the Free Library.

Although his circuit was smaller and less physically demanding than at Sale, an unanticipated problem at Beechworth was the presence in the district of the Kelly bushranger gang. Foster regarded them as a major obstacle to the administration of justice, as in many



Unknown engraver
The Beechworth Police Court during the Kelly committal hearing, 1880
Wood engraving
Pictures Collection, State Library Victoria, IAN28/08/80/152
Foster on the bench, top right, accompanied by Captain Standish. Kelly on the far left
Published in The Illustrated Australian News.

cases witnesses refused to give evidence, either through sympathy for the Kellys, or fear of them. Since October 1878 the bushrangers had been eluding police after the murder of three police officers near Mansfield. In June 1880 they killed a police informer near Beechworth, planning to ambush the police whom they correctly anticipated would be sent by train from Melbourne in yet another attempt to capture them. On the day after the shooting, Foster, in his capacity as coroner, attended the scene to make a preliminary investigation. Shortly afterwards the planned ambush of the police train was foiled and in the ensuing gun battle all members of the gang were killed with the exception of Ned Kelly, who was captured.[32]

After being treated for his injuries in Melbourne, Kelly was returned to Beechworth for the committal hearing to determine whether there was sufficient evidence for him to be tried in the Supreme Court on charges of murdering the police officers near Mansfield. Foster presided over the committal hearing which commenced on 3 August 1880. He was accompanied on the bench by his former fellow Chinese Protector, now the Chief Commissioner of Police Captain Frederick Standish, a practice which extraordinary as it would seem today, was not so in that period.[33] At the end of the three-day hearing Foster found that there was sufficient evidence on which to commit Kelly for trial at the Supreme Court at Beechworth. The venue was subsequently changed to Melbourne on the grounds that the number of Kelly's supporters in Beechworth would make it impossible to obtain an impartial jury. Kelly was tried at Melbourne, found guilty and hanged on 11 November 1880.

The family's life at Beechworth was saddened by the death of another child, the oldest son Frederick, who was killed in a mining accident in far north-west New South Wales in 1882.[34] They lived at Beechworth until January 1890 when Foster received a temporary appointment as Police Magistrate for South Gippsland, and the rest of the family moved to Melbourne. Later that year Foster's wish to return to Ballarat was finally fulfilled when he was appointed Resident Magistrate at East Ballarat. Here the family lived in a spacious house at Soldier's Hill, and were able to resume their customary activities. Regrettably, Foster did not live long to enjoy it. After several months of declining health, he died on 18 March 1894,[35] survived by his wife and eight of their ten children. Catty died the following year. As an indication of the respect in which he was held, the flags at Ballarat were flown at half-mast on the day of his funeral.

***

Having been despatched to the colonies for a youthful misdemeanour, William Henry Foster built a new life for himself and established a new branch of the Foster family on the other side of the world. After initial help from his cousin Charles La Trobe, he succeeded in his career by hard work and dedication, not only in the

performance of his duties, but by participating in the cultural and philanthropic activities of all the communities in which he lived. Although so many are today forgotten, it was on the shoulders of officials like William Henry Foster that much of the stability and prosperity of Victoria can be attributed.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank La Trobe Society member Peter Hiscock AM (formerly CEO of Sovereign Hill Museums Association, Ballarat) for his insights into the role of the Chinese Protector and for bringing to my attention the picture of John Alloo's Chinese restaurant.

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La Trobe's coat of arms

Inscription

Vice-regal insignia

The La Trobe Candelabrum Centrepiece

By Susan Priestley

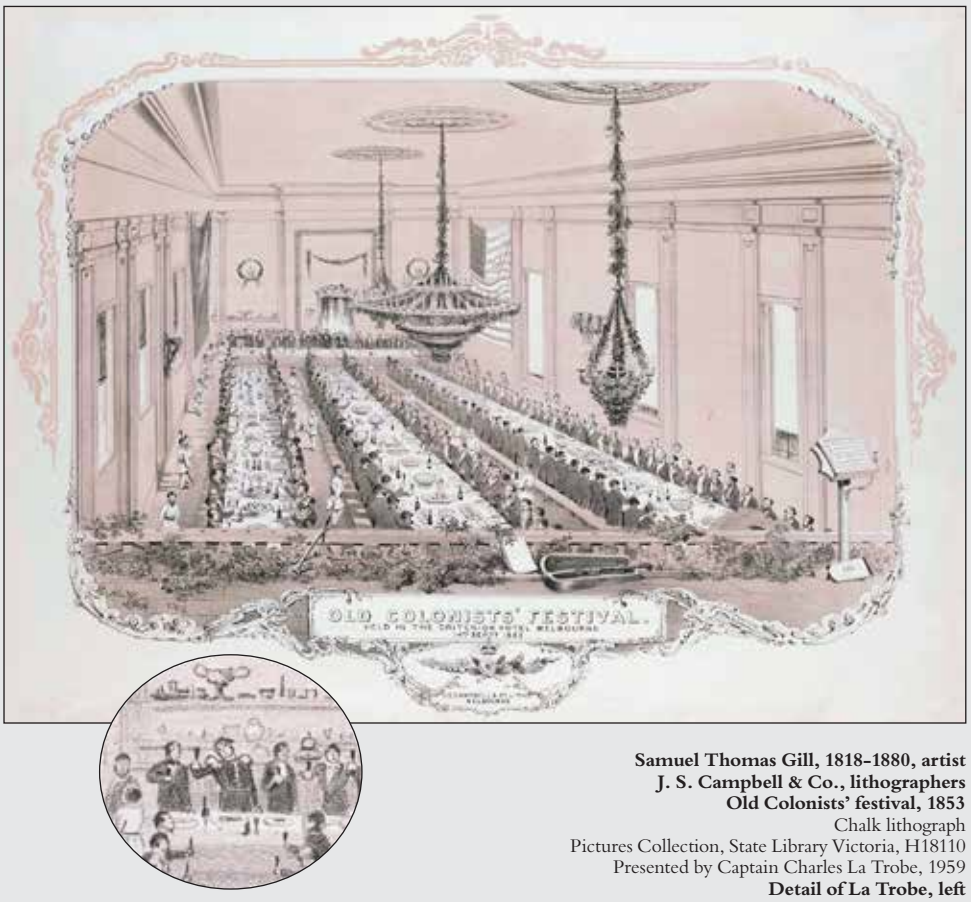
Susan Priestley MA (Melb), RHSV Fellow and committee member of the La Trobe Society, is a practising historian with an interest in recovering lives and solving enigmas about people. Her eleven published histories embrace aspects of places, people and institutions in Victoria. She is currently extending an absorbing interest in biography as a PhD candidate at the Australian National University, investigating the nature of Australian identity during the Federation era, using the methodology of collective biography.

In May last, Susan gave the Friends of La Trobe's Cottage annual lecture on the farewell testimonial presented to Charles Joseph La Trobe in December 1853. It included information about the makers of both the gold cup and the silver centrepiece. Following the private viewing of the latter, now held in the collection of the National Gallery of Victoria, and further research, she is able to present a much fuller account of the piece and its provenance.

On 30 May 2019, La Trobe Society members were privileged to have a private viewing in the National Gallery of Victoria of the silver candelabrum centrepiece that was commissioned in London in late 1854 with the residue of the Lieutenant-Governor's farewell testimonial fund, which had been collected in Melbourne in December 1853. It would appear that more than half of the fund totalling 'not less than £1,000' had been dispensed in the purchase of a gold cup or vase, which had been made in Melbourne by 'working jewellers' Bond and Tofield of La Trobe Street. I wrote about the cup and its likely fate after 1862 in the July 2018 issue of *La Trobeana*.[1] This article will focus on the candelabrum, highlighting linkages between the two pieces that were revealed in our close-up view, and confirmed in the digitised images that have since been provided by the Gallery. Further evidence garnered from John Barnes' biography[2] and other sources confirms that its design is fully evocative of La Trobe's term in Victoria beginning 180 years ago this year. Moreover, it evokes aspects of the man himself since it is most likely that he personally directed its making.

Background to the farewell

On the last day of 1852, La Trobe wrote his letter of resignation to the Colonial Office in London, and in February 1853 farewelled his wife and



Samuel Thomas Gill, 1818-1880, artist
J. S. Campbell & Co., lithographers
Old Colonists' festival, 1853
Chalk lithograph
Pictures Collection, State Library Victoria, H18110
Presented by Captain Charles La Trobe, 1959
Detail of La Trobe, left

children who were going to her family home at Neuchâtel in Switzerland where eldest daughter Agnes had been since 1845 for her education. His retirement became public knowledge in Victoria in July 1853 but appointment of a successor took another five months, and in the event Sir Charles Hotham did not arrive in Victoria until towards the end of June 1854, six weeks after La Trobe's departure.

From September 1853, there was growing public feeling that the fourteen-year term of Victoria's head of government should be recognised. The Mayor of Melbourne at the time, John Thomas Smith, who had been a resident since 1837,[3] invited La Trobe to the Old Colonists' Association dinner at the Criterion Hotel in Collins Street on 14 September. Smith also proposed the toast which evoked the gracious response from La Trobe that I cited in the previous article. In the S.T. Gill lithograph of the *Old Colonists' Festival,* which has since been located, La Trobe (upper left) can be identified by his epaulettes. He is raising his glass to the old colonists seated on the table to the right. The Lieutenant-Governor also accepted an invitation to the mayoral ball on 26 October held in Smith's Queen's Theatre in Queen Street. A ball on a much larger scale was envisaged by the organisers of the farewell testimonial, who held their first meeting on 9 December. Heading the official committee list was the Speaker of the Legislative Council followed by the Mayor of Melbourne, who by then was John Hodgson.[4] It continued with the consuls of Prussia, United States of America, Belgium, France, Portugal and Holland (consular agent), indicative of the trade links already established in goldrush Victoria. Among the forty-seven other committee men, who were personally named, were fourteen Legislative Councillors, some former and some future parliamentarians, Justices of the Peace such as Robert A. Balbirnie and James Smith, professionals such as barrister R.D. Ireland,[5] and the then editor/proprietor of the *Melbourne Herald* George Cavenagh,[6] as well as prosperous businessmen like David Benjamin, who was to have a significant role in the later history of the gold presentation piece.[7]

For the ball on 28 December, just on three weeks later, the committee chose the newly-completed, but as yet unused, Tattersalls Horse Bazaar in Lonsdale Street.[8] An engraving accompanying a summary account of the occasion in *The Illustrated London News* of 17 June

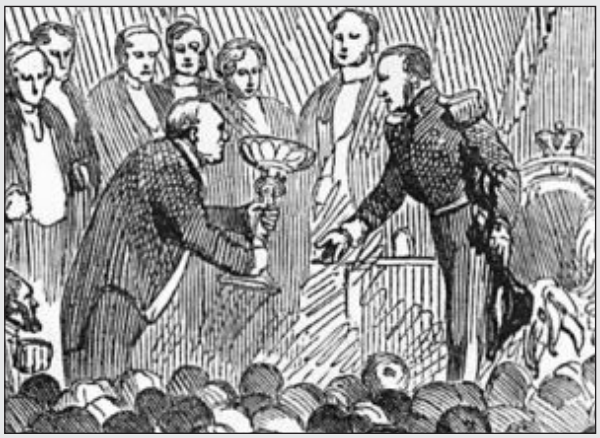
1854 is the only known visual representation of the gold cup. There is likewise only one record of the full presentation address of the Speaker of the Legislative Council, James Palmer. A careful reading (or re-reading) of the address is warranted for the warm sincerity of its composers in 1853, and because it was echoed in the words inscribed on both the gold cup or vase and the silver centrepiece:

> 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 — with your warmest and best sympathies — 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.[9]

The silver centrepiece

The National Gallery of Victoria has little information about the piece except that it was made in London about 1854-55 by the silversmithing firm of Smith, Nicholson & Co. By researching digitised British newspapers and directories, I established that the firm was headed by a partnership between silversmiths Stephen Smith and William Nicholson that lasted from June 1850 until March 1865. Smith's father Benjamin had begun the business in 1822 and Stephen carried on for some years after the partnership was dissolved.[10] Nicholson was probably a descendant of William James Nicholson, a silversmith with premises in Cornhill during the early nineteenth century.

An advertisement for Smith, Nicholson & Co, silversmiths and electroplaters, in the *London Evening Standard* of 4 June 1850 gave the firm's address as 12 Duke Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields. Moreover, there were 'Show Rooms that adjoin the manufactory [that] will be found to contain, as formerly, a very extensive assortment of ornamental plate in the highest style of art, adapted for presentation &c., as well as the choicest patterns of the more useful articles in silver and electro-plate'. Lincoln's Inn Fields is the setting for one of London's ancient Inns



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.

of Court, and Duke Street entered the square from the south. Hence the area then, as now, was well frequented by business and professional people, the firm being commissioned to make testimonial silver for some other newsworthy presentations of the period.[11] On those grounds alone, a La Trobe visit to the Smith, Nicholson & Co show rooms to select the basic silver piece and prescribe its design is quite likely.

The candelabrum centrepiece is visually impressive in size and construction, the whole averaging 81.2 centimetres or almost three feet in height, which is about double the height of the gold cup.[12] Six arms supporting candle-holders covered by glass dishes, and crowned by a larger non-removable dish, contribute to its suitability for social occasions, day or evening. Its styling, however, is distinctively individual. On a base fashioned by chasing and repoussé to resemble a rocky pile that hints of La Trobe's love of mountains stand three figures, each about 20cm high and finely detailed in dress and accoutrements. Between them are clusters of acanthus, the classic symbol of enduring life. A tall Aboriginal man with short cloak off his shoulders, shield and spears in one hand, stone axe and possum in the other, and a dead kangaroo on the 'rocks' below partly draped across the spear thrower that brought it down, evoke the lifestyle of the original inhabitants. A shepherd in round brimmed hat, tunic and gaiters, cradling a lamb and a rough-cut stave, with an eager dog beside him, a cooking pot, shears and a resting sheep on the 'rocks' below, evoke those with 'flocks and herds',[13] who had already invaded Port Phillip at the time of La Trobe's arrival. A goldminer with pipe in mouth, knife in belt, pick and spade on his back, holding a scoop and panning sieve, with a blanket swag, drinking mug and fire grilling rack on the 'rocks' below represents the flood of newcomers after 1851 that brought great prosperity to Victoria and so much head and heart ache to the Lieutenant-Governor.

La Trobe may well have provided sketches for these figures, perhaps modelled on the Aboriginal chief 'in true fighting attitude' and a digger with 'his little black pipe' that were among items grouped around the base of the presentation gold cup.[14] Moreover, the fern leaves drooping over the figures from the top of the central column have a distinctive Victorian resonance. This is confirmed by John Barnes' discovery of a letter dated 24 November 1854 from La Trobe to Sir William Hooker, Director of Kew Gardens, seeking permission for silversmiths working on the silver testimonial to visit the fernery so as to get the details right of 'the Australian fern' (*Cyathea cooperi*).[15] The central column of the candelabrum in fact consists of three slender tree fern trunks, a reminder of La Trobe's travels through Gippsland, the Otways and the Dandenong ranges.

On one of three bright silver spaces around the base is an inscription identical with that on the gold cup, echoing the Speaker's address at the presentation ball. It reads:

PRESENTED
TO HIS EXCELLENCY
Charles Joseph La Trobe Esqr
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.

Smith, Nicholson & Co, London
La Trobe testimonial candelabrum centrepiece, 1855
Silver, glass : dimensions 81.2 x 50.9 x 52.1 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, D102.a-h-1986

Detail of figures and accoutrements
Left: Miner and shepherd
Right: Shepherd, Aboriginal man and miner

On another space is La Trobe's coat of arms and its motto of strength and tolerance, 'Bear and Forbear', and on the third is the vice-regal insignia framing an almost microscopic scene of sheep in an undulating landscape with a horned ram gazing out. All the inscribed sections strongly indicate that the silversmiths had personal instructions from La Trobe.

In July 1855 *The llustrated London News* carried an account of 'The Latrobe Testimonial' beneath an engraving of the impressive centrepiece, mentioning that it was accompanied by a dinner service of silver, presumably serving dishes of the 'useful' kind noted in the 1850 advertisement, and that the whole was valued at £800.[16] The gold cup presented before La Trobe's departure from Melbourne was also mentioned, with its value put at 1,000 guineas (£1,050),[17] and its making mistakenly ascribed to Smith, Nicholson & Co. That error may have arisen from misinterpretations along the chain of information that surely originated with La Trobe. That he chose the silver dinner service and designed the ornamentation of the six-light candelabrum evokes (for me anyway) visions of him dining with his family and visitors in its softly diffused light, perhaps even reading or writing letters by it until his sight failed completely.

Provenance of the centrepiece

While the gold presentation piece was seemingly disposed of about 1862, the silver centrepiece was kept in the family after La Trobe's death in December 1875, and for at least another century. When the National Gallery of Victoria purchased it in 1986, its provenance was not publically revealed,[18] but this can now be clarified.

In 1953 the centrepiece was in the possession of a La Trobe grand-daughter, Elisabeth Sophie, the daughter of Agnes and widow of Baron Godefroy de Blonay of Vaux Switzerland. This is confirmed by a report of a meeting of the Trustees of Melbourne's Public Library (now State Library Victoria) that the Baronne had offered them the silver centrepiece for sale at £700. Chairman of Trustees Sir Irving Benson said that 'the offer was one for consideration of the State government rather than of the Library trustees', who thus 'declined to buy the relic'.[19] Nineteen years earlier, at the time of Victoria's centenary celebrations in 1934, the Baronne had donated to the Library a large consignment of La Trobe correspondence.[20] A note in the Neuchâtel Archives that Baronne de Blonay 'has set the price for the silver La Trobe centre piece (Farewell from Melbourne) at 7,000

Swiss francs' probably dates from around 1956 when the family residence *Chateau de Grandson* was sold.[21]

On the Baronne's death in 1967, the centrepiece would have been inherited by one or all of her four children, who are therefore the likely seller/sellers in Geneva in 1986. The Gallery purchased the piece through the Art Foundation of Victoria, with the assistance of Hugh M. Morgan, Foundation Governor, whose endowment was specifically aimed at extending the silverware collection.[22] The Foundation's annual report for 1986 recognised that it had acquired a masterpiece of nineteenth century silver, with an overwhelmingly important heritage aspect.[23] The price paid is kept permanently confidential. However, the auction catalogue in the Gallery's library reveals that the candelabrum, '77cm [*sic*] high, in fitted chest, 8,700 [i.e. 8.7] kg', was listed with an estimated price of 20,000-30,000 Swiss francs.[24] A manuscript note on the inside back cover, '20-25 & 10%', suggests a likely price at auction of 25,000 Swiss francs (plus buyer premium).[25] Confirmation of the family provenance and professional recognition that it is an artistic masterpiece makes it even more a matter of regret that the testimonial silver piece so redolent of Victoria in its infancy and of its first Lieutenant-Governor is not on permanent display in Victoria's major gallery.

Endnotes

1 Susan Priestley, 'The La Trobe Golden Testimonial', *La Trobeana*, vol.17, no.2, July 2018, pp.42-49. (In newspapers both 'cup' and 'vase' were used in descriptions of the golden testimonial.)

2 John Barnes, *La Trobe: Traveller, Writer, Governor*, Canberra: Halstead Press in association with State Library Victoria and La Trobe University, 2017.

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

4 John Hodgson (1799-1860), Parliament of Victoria, Re-member database, https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/about/people-in-parliament/re-member/details/24/696 (accessed 20 May 2019).

5 J.B. Woods, 'Ireland, Richard Davies (1815-1817)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol.4, 1972, pp.460-461.

6 M.J. Tipping, 'Cavenagh, George (1808-1869)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol.1, 1966, pp 216-217.

7 Advertisement in *The Banner,* Melbourne, 23 December 1853, p.15.

8 For a view of the bazaar, see the S.T. Gill lithograph, Priestley p.43. (Held State Library Victoria, H18109, presented by Captain Charles La Trobe, 1959.)

9 *Banner*, 30 December 1853, p.7.

10 Notice of dissolution of partnership, *London Gazette*, 24 March 1865.

11 Note also the Thomas Ware Smart testimonial (1859) at the National Gallery of Australia, NGA80.1588.1-3, which has certain similarities to the earlier La Trobe testimonial.

12 The gold cup was 16 inches (40.5 cm) high and weighed 170 ounces (4.82 kg).

13 A reference to the 'possession of numerous flocks and herds' in La Trobe's address to the citizens of Melbourne on his arrival as the Superintendent of the Port Phillip District, 3 October 1839, *Port Phillip Patriot*, 7 October 1839, p.2. (Quoted in Dianne Reilly Drury, *La Trobe: the Making of a Governor,* Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2006, p.146.)

14 As described in *The Banner,* 30 December 1853, p.7.

15 Barnes, p.327.

16 *Illustrated London News*, 28 July 1855, p.124.

17 One thousand guineas is also given in *The Banner,* 30 December 1853, p.7.

18 National Gallery of Victoria, *Annual report*, 1985/1986, p.6.

19 *Age*, 3 October 1953, p.10.

20 Dianne Reilly, 'The Charles Joseph La Trobe Archive: an overview', *La Trobe Library Journal*, No.58, Spring 1996, p.9. The correspondence was supplemented by the treasured La Trobe Archive in 1989.

21 La Trobe Neuchâtel Archive, Manuscripts Collection, State Library Victoria, MS 13354/49 (original file Archives de l'Etat, Neuchâtel, NEUCH 18-55); 'History of Château de Grandson', http://www.chateau-grandson.ch/en/blonay.html (accessed 29 May 2019).

22 Art Foundation of Victoria, *Annual report,* 1986, p.4.

23 Ibid.

24 *European Silver*, Geneva: Christie's (International) S.A., 1986, p.42.

25 As a comparison, a Victorian silver six-light candelabrum centrepiece, Stephen Smith, 1869, 78.1cm in height, sold for £32,500 through Christie's, London in 2014 (estimate £25,000-40,000). It was on a wood base, featuring a cast dragon, tiger and lion and three cast figures representing Manchu China, Mughal India and South Africa. (https://www.christies.com/lotfinder/Lot/a-victorian-silver-six-light-candelabrum-centrepiece-mark-5847366-details.aspx, accessed 18 September 2019.)

Nicholas Chevalier, 1828-1902, artist
Mt Munda from St Hubert, Yerring, 1863
Oil on wooden panel
Courtesy of Lauraine Diggins Fine Art
Verso label: The City of London Fine Art Gallery
Mount Monda [*sic*] is located north-east of *Gulf Station*

Addendum

John Dickson: 'a possessor of numerous flocks' in La Trobe's Port Phillip District

Irene Kearsey wrote in the previous issue of *La Trobeana*: 'John Dickson, the man who held the early *Gulf Station* leases and a man known to be a "possessor of numerous flocks", is rather a mystery man, even to his own descendants'.[1] Anne Dickson has since contacted Irene with some family information. Melbourne-based Anne is descended from John and Alice (née Dalrymple) Dickson's first child, William, born 12 September 1844 at Upper Yarra Yarra, died *Yarrawin Station* near Nyngan, western New South Wales, May 1927. Irene had been in contact with Deniliquin-based descendants of the youngest son, James, born 23 July 1853 at Upper Yarra Yarra, died August 1917.

Another family member gave Anne the name of John Dickson's mother, Sarah Biggar. The dates of birth for the children of Sarah and William Dickson of Dumfries were: William 1807, Jean 3 February 1809, Janet 10 January 1811 (died 1818), Agnes 4 March 1813, John 16 February 1815 (not 1813 as deduced by Irene), Fanny (Frances) 5 July 1817, Janet 2 February 1820 and Thomas 2 June 1821. All these births, except for William, are recorded as being at Glencairn, Dumfriesshire, Scotland.

A family tree on *Ancestry* includes the date of death of Sarah Dickson (née Biggar) as 31 December 1824. Anne contacted the compiler of that family tree, Hamish Biggar; however, he was unable to provide any further information on Sarah. He indicated that he obtained her death date from a local booklet on families in the Dumfries area. Anne has been unable to locate either Sarah's marriage certificate to William Dickson, or her death certificate.

The death certificate for John Dickson's father, William Dickson,[2] records the date as 29 May 1861, and the place as Laurielknowe, Maxwelltown, Kirkcudbrightshire, Scotland;

the certificate also names his deceased wife as Sarah Biggar. The information on this death certificate may match a William Dickson born 1775 in Troqueer, Kirkcudbright (now Dumfries).

Without a death certificate for Sarah Biggar it is difficult to determine her year of birth. However, a Sarah Biggar has been located, born in 1781 in Holywood, Dumfries. The will of William Dickson,[3] widower of Sarah Biggar, makes mention of his son John Dickson 'who has lived in Australia for many years'.

We would welcome further details about the life of John Dickson, pastoralist *Gulf Station*, Upper Yarra Yarra; born Glencairn, Dumfriesshire, 1815, died Deniliquin, New South Wales, 1878. While ours is not a genealogical journal, the details provided here help flesh out the important *Gulf Station* story.

Endnotes

1 Irene Kearsey, 'John Dickson: "a possessor of numerous flocks" in La Trobe's Port Phillip District', *La Trobeana*, vol.18, no.2, July 2019, pp.13-23 (13).

2 1861 Dickson, William, Statutory Registers Death 882/48 National Records of Scotland.

3 Wills & Testaments Reference SC15/41/11 Dumfries Sheriff Court.

Forthcoming events

NOVEMBER

Friday 29

Christmas Cocktails
Time: 6.30-8.30 pm
Venue: The Melbourne Club,
36 Collins Street, Melbourne
Guest Speaker: Paul de Serville,
Historian
Topic: The Early History of the
Melbourne Club
Invitations have been sent to members

DECEMBER

Sunday 1

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 bookings required. All welcome

Sunday 1

The La Trobes' Music
Time: 2–4pm
Venue: La Trobe's Cottage, Melbourne
Hear music that would have echoed around *Jolimont* in the time of the La Trobe family
No bookings required. All welcome

2020

MARCH

Sunday 1

La Trobe's Birthday Celebration
Time: 4.30-6.00 pm
Venue: La Trobe's Cottage and Garden
Speakers: tba
Topic: La Trobe's Art in the Garden
Refreshments
Admission: $10 per person
Bookings essential *

APRIL

Tuesday 21

Joint La Trobe Society/ RHSV AGL Shaw Lecture
Time: 6.30-8.00 pm
Venue: Royal Historical Society of Victoria,
Cnr William and A'Beckett Streets,
Melbourne
Speaker: tba
Refreshments
Admission: $35 per person, tbc
Bookings essential *

MAY

Date tba

Friends of La Trobe's Cottage Lecture
Time: 6.30-8.00 pm
Venue: Mueller Hall,
Royal Botanic Gardens,
Birdwood Avenue, Melbourne, tbc
Guest Speaker: Dr Eleanor Robin OAM
Topic: Swanston: Merchant Statesman
Refreshments
Admission: $25 per person, tbc
Bookings essential *

JUNE

Sunday 14 tbc

Sunday Talk for Members and Friends
Time: 2.30-4.00 pm
(doors open 2.00 pm)
Venue: Mueller Hall, Royal Botanic Gardens, Birdwood Avenue, Melbourne
Speaker: tba
Refreshments
Admission: $10 per person
Bookings essential *

JULY

Friday 3

Melbourne Rare Book Week Lecture
Time: 6.30–8.00 pm
Venue: Tonic House, 386 Flinders Lane, Melbourne, tbc
Guest Speaker: tba
No charge. Bookings essential *

AUGUST

Wednesday 5

La Trobe Society Annual General Meeting and Dinner
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Lyceum Club, Ridgway Place, Melbourne
Guest Speaker: Michael Veitch, Author, actor, broadcaster,
Topic: The Hell Ship: Ticonderoga,
Invitations will be sent to members

*** Bookings**
secretary@latrobsociety.org.au, or phone 9646 2112 (please leave a message)

For the latest information on upcoming events, please refer to the Society's events page www.latrobesociety.org.au/events.html

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The back issues may be accessed at www.latrobesociety.org.au/LaTrobeana.html
They may be searched by keyword.

Contributions welcome

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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 cèrca, la trova"