La Trobeana

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

Vol 19, No 3, November 2020

ISSN 1447-4026

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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

In many ways, 2020 is a year that most of us would not want to repeat, surrounded as we have been by the danger, the fear and the horrors of Covid-19. We have all been stuck in an anxious limbo between the advent of the pandemic and whatever might come afterwards. For members of the La Trobe Society, the ever-present risks and the need for social distancing have resulted in the postponement of the exciting program of events and lectures drawn up by the Committee for 2020. These will form the basis for next year's program when we can safely gather together again. Regrettably, our usual Christmas celebration will not take place this year, due to the restrictions on gathering numbers of people together. However, a special celebration of La Trobe's 220th birthday in March 2021, and the Society's 20th anniversary, is currently being planned, subject of course to public health advice.

There has been at least one good by-product of our enforced isolation. For the first time ever, we held the Annual General Meeting remotely - via Zoom, which was a great learning experience for many of us. Although this technology for video conferencing has proven to be effective and easy to use for our Committee meetings and the Annual General Meeting, we can look forward to our usual pleasant and sociable meetings face to face next year.

A constant feature of membership and a major strength of the La Trobe Society is our journal, *La Trobeana*. The results of excellent research in the November edition will no doubt give you hours of reading pleasure. This issue features contributions from five members of the Society.

Lorraine Finlay continues to provide us with the benefits of her meticulous research, this article '"A Convenient Public Office Ought to be Provided": La Trobe's Government Offices 1839 to 1854' examining a previously little-explored and vexed question of suitable and appropriately located offices for La Trobe from his arrival in 1839.

The article, 'William Lonsdale and the Development of Early Melbourne 1836-1854', by Dr Fay Woodhouse is a real contribution to the scholarship about the long-neglected Lonsdale. A soldier and capable administrator, he arrived in September 1836 as first police magistrate at Port Phillip overseeing the early development of the settlement.

Susan Priestley's lively account in her article 'The Governor, the Superintendent and his Carriage' of Governor Sir Charles FitzRoy's week-long visit to Melbourne and Geelong from 12 to 20 March 1849, is packed with interesting detail. It describes the numerous celebrations hosted by residents to greet his arrival, as well as giving a hair-raising account involving a runaway carriage through the centre of Melbourne.

Dr John Dwyer QC has indulged his long-time interest in the history of the Royal Botanic Gardens by investigating the life and work of 'William Swainson: La Trobe's other Botanical Appointment'. Swainson was engaged by La Trobe in September 1852 for a term of one year to study the timber trees of the colony, particularly the Eucalypts.

It is delightful to include in this edition another fascinating article by Anne Marsden, the author of two books based on her research into the history of the Melbourne Mechanics' Institution and its founders, among the earliest settlers in Melbourne. In this article, 'Beyond the Public Gaze: The Marriage of Caroline Bowles and James Simpson in pre-goldrush Melbourne', she describes the unconventional courtship of James Simpson, and his eventual marriage to Caroline Bowles.

Have a Happy Christmas and very best wishes for 2021.

Diane Gardiner AM
Hon. President
C J La Trobe Society

'A Convenient Public Office Ought to be Provided': La Trobe's government offices, 1839 to 1854

By Lorraine Finlay

Lorraine Finlay, a member of the La Trobe Society, is the former Volunteer Property Manager of La Trobe's Cottage and a graduate of Monash University in Visual Arts and History, with an MA in Australian Studies. The history of early Melbourne and the era of Charles La Trobe's governorship and his legacy continue to be of special interest.

Charles Joseph La Trobe wrote to his publisher in London in December 1840 that he lived in a pretty cottage about a mile out of Melbourne, but that on his appointment as Superintendent of the Port Phillip District, 'Her Majesty's Government neither gave me a house nor the means of keeping an open one'.[1] Not only did he have to purchase and ship a prefabricated house to the colony, but there was no adequate provision for a building from which to administer the district. He worked out of a number of makeshift offices for over six years. One of the buildings he utilised as an office was John Batman's house situated on the slopes of a picturesque hill just beyond the official boundaries of the township. Purpose-built government offices were eventually constructed and completed in early 1846.

John Batman

John Batman's expedition from Launceston to the Port Phillip District of New South Wales during May and June of 1835 had been at his own instigation and interest from a loosely formed association of Van Diemen's Land settlers.[2] (The Port Phillip Association comprising fourteen members formally came into being following his return on 24 June 1835.) Batman wrote in his journal that after making contact with eight chiefs who possessed the whole of the country near Port Phillip [Bay] he purchased a large tract of land: about 600,000 acres (242,800 hectares), and that in return as payment, he gave a number of sundry items and an agreement to provide yearly rent. On 8 June he recorded in his journal a much-quoted entry that, whilst exploring the surrounding countryside, 'the boat went up the large river I have spoken of, which comes from the east, and I am glad to state, about six miles up found the river all good water and very deep. This will be the place for a village'.[3] Upon learning of Batman's actions the Governor of New South Wales, Sir Richard Bourke, issued a proclamation on 26 August 1835 declaring the Port Phillip Association's 'treaty' with the Aboriginal people to be null and void and that anyone without authority would be considered as trespassers.[4]

Despite Governor Bourke's proclamation, by September 1835 a small settlement beside the Yarra River had begun to emerge, mainly initiated by John Batman, John Pascoe Fawkner and their followers. Batman began shipping over building materials and supplies from Launceston and by April 1836 had constructed a home for his family on twenty acres (eight hectares) of land he claimed as part of the agreement with his fellow Van Diemen's Land associates. The site eventually became known as Batman's Hill. It lay close to the river on gently sloping land just beyond a cluster of rudimentary buildings of the small township. John Batman's house was described as containing eight rooms, floored and plastered with four fireplaces and with outbuildings comprising a bakehouse, kitchen with ovens, a privy, storeroom, stables, barn and slaughter house.[5]

Phillip Parker King, 1791-1856, artist
Commandant's house at Melbourne, 1837
Pencil sketch from Captain King's notebook, 1837-1843
Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales, MLMSS 963
Depicts Governor Bourke's visit in March 1837, his camp in the distance.
(See note p.10)

In recognition of the still unsanctioned, but growing settlement, Governor Bourke issued an official notice published in the *New South Wales Government Gazette* on 14 September 1836 that His Majesty's Government had now authorised the 'location of Settlers on vacant Crown Lands adjacent to the shores of Port Phillip… several persons having already passed over there from Van Diemen's Land'. The notice also issued a warning that until the district was surveyed there was no advantage in occupying any land, as once surveyed, there would be a public auction and the land sold to the best bidder.[6]

Captain Lonsdale

Bourke had at the same time appointed Captain William Lonsdale of the 4th or King's Own Regiment to be despatched from Sydney as Police Magistrate of the district. Upon receiving his appointment Lonsdale was notified that he would be supplied with a small framed wooden house as his temporary residence.[7] He was directed that once he arrived, he was to select a spot which would be convenient for erecting the house for himself, barracks for the military, a commissariat store and huts for constables and other necessary shelters.[8] Lonsdale arrived on HMS *Rattlesnake* on 27 September 1836 accompanied by his wife, their infant child and two servants, along with a number of other government personnel. The *Stirlingshire* with collector of customs, constables, extra soldiers, surveyors and timber, bricks and supplies arrived a week later. The Lonsdale family remained on the *Rattlesnake* until a house was ready for occupation. (William Lonsdale referred to this dwelling as the 'subaltern's house' whereas Captain, later Rear Admiral, Phillip Parker King in a sketch of March 1837 called it the 'Commandant's house'). The location for the dwelling was in an area nominated as the Government Reserve.[9] Once a few basic structures had been built Lonsdale appears to have initially worked from a primitive building which served as a temporary police office and magistrate's court located on the reserve.[10] The Lonsdales remained in the 'Commandant's house' for a year (after which time it served as Lieutenant Smyth's quarters).[11] A more permanent residence for the Lonsdales was a prefabricated dwelling of five rooms despatched from Sydney on the *Isabella* in March 1837. Some of the materials had to be jettisoned overboard in heavy seas en route to the settlement. Substitute building materials were sourced in Melbourne and a weatherboard cottage erected by 30 October 1837 on present-day Wellington Parade near the corner of Flinders and Spring Streets,[12] adjacent to where La Trobe's prefabricated cottage *Jolimont* was to be erected two years later.

Following the official recognition of the settlement and Lonsdale's arrival, Batman and other members of the Port Phillip Association who had illegally settled on crown land claimed compensation, in particular for the costs expended on capital improvements on the land they had occupied. This was initially rejected. Governor Bourke did finally agree to some compensation, and in early November 1836 the amount of £7,000 was granted to the Association as a whole, of which Batman was to receive £412 as his share.[13]

Governor Bourke and surveyor Robert Hoddle arrived in the settlement in March 1837 to finalise a plan for the township, now officially named Melbourne. The plan was mostly completed by late March, and small allotments pegged out within larger blocks of land, ready for auction. Batman's house and outbuildings and acreage at the south-west extremity of the town lay on crown land outside the surveyed area. He applied to Governor Bourke via Captain Lonsdale with a memorial written on 21 March 1837 asking to keep possession of his land. Governor Bourke advised Batman a week later that he could remain on the land until a reply was received from the Secretary of State in London, but cautioned him that no additional enclosures be made.[14] Batman waited a year for an answer and finally received a letter rejecting his request. His response was to then send another memorial to the Secretary of State on 30 March 1838.[15] He claimed in consideration of his pioneering endeavours in the Port Phillip District he should be eligible for a land grant or

Wilbraham Frederick Evelyn Liardet, 1799-1878, artist
Treasury and Superintendent's office [1875]
Watercolour, pencil, pen and ink; view of c.1841
Pictures Collection, State Library Victoria, H28250/12 (detail)

Wilbraham Frederick Evelyn Liardet, 1799-1878, artist
John Batman's house [1875]
Watercolour, pencil, pen and ink; view of c.1842
Pictures Collection, State Library Victoria, H28250/3

be able to purchase his twenty acres at a moderate price, as he had spent £1,500 on improvements. Again his request was denied.[16]

La Trobe's first office

Charles Joseph La Trobe arrived in Melbourne to take up his appointment as Superintendent of the Port Phillip District on 1 October 1839; his commission was read to the public two days later by Robert Saunders Webb. Garryowen in his *Chronicles of Early Melbourne* described the Superintendent's first office as then being situated 'in a cottage in Little Flinders Street, one of the two apartments of which was used as a sub-Treasury'.[17] Charles La Trobe's position had officially been listed on 10 September 1839, with Robert Webb's (second in seniority) appointment as the Sub-Treasurer.[18] Soon after La Trobe arrived in Melbourne, he wrote in his diary that he went with Mr Webb to his office, 'one room, for which he pays dear'.[19] (The office was being rented by the government, see picture p.12.) Webb's office appears to have been located close to the corner of Queen Street and Little Flinders Street, near the rudimentary Queens Wharf.[20] La Trobe may have shared these facilities with Webb, his sub-treasurer from late 1839 to mid-1840.

A report in December 1839 by the Clerk of Works, James Rattenbury, for the newly-arrived La Trobe described the current condition of government buildings and noted that they

were not worth repairing. A scribbled entry on the front page also lists three buildings required: a Superintendent's Office, Customs House and a wharf.[21] In March, La Trobe wrote to the Colonial Secretary in Sydney on the 'Necessity for the erection of an Office for the transaction of the business of the Superintendent's Office at Melbourne'.[22]

Rather than a permanent office for the Superintendent, a semi-permanent arrangement had already been considered by the newly-appointed Governor of New South Wales, Sir George Gipps, before La Trobe's arrival in Melbourne. La Trobe received a copy of a letter sent from Downing Street, London, dated 16 December 1839, stating that it was aware of John Batman's death (on 6 May 1839) and that it approved of the decision by the Executive Council of New South Wales to allow 'the materials of the house and other movables to be taken away for the benefit of the family of Mr Batman before the land is given up to the Colonial Government'.[23] Further correspondence to La Trobe from Sydney stated that the administrators of Batman's estate were permitted to lease the property from 7 August 1840 until 7 August 1841, unless required by the government sooner.[24] With ongoing complications over Batman's will La Trobe may have decided to delay taking over Batman's house,[25] for he continued working with his clerk, Edward Lee, in a small cottage throughout 1840. (Edward Lee was La Trobe's only clerk for the first two years. A second clerk and messenger were then added to his staff in 1841.)

The *Port Phillip Gazette* in May 1840 listed the achievements of a town only four years old, mainly the result, it considered, of the efforts of the colonists.[26] The article questioned where were the facilities that a government should provide. In an editorial in September of that year the *Gazette,* still unimpressed with the lack of progress, itemised the public buildings needed and amongst those yet to be erected was an office for the Superintendent.[27]

Second government office

Garryowen wrote that by February 1841 La Trobe had vacated the aforementioned cottage for 'a somewhat more commodious brick tenement at the north-eastern corner of William and Little Collins Streets'.[28] This 'tenement' was leased from Benjamin Baxter,[29] and was located next door to Melbourne's second post office. Part of the double-brick building was also occupied by William Lonsdale who had been promoted from Police Magistrate to Sub-Treasurer.[30] La Trobe and Lonsdale used this leased building as offices for approximately a year. (See picture, p.7.)

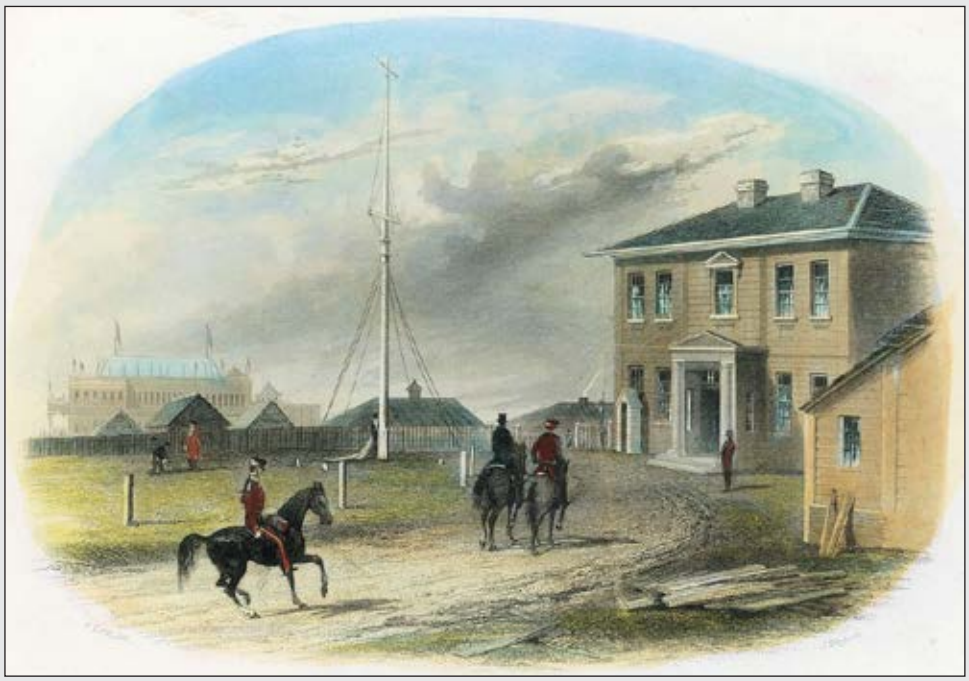
La Trobe's third office: Batman's house

The next office for the Superintendent, after moving from the leased building on the corner of William and Little Collins Street, was described by Garryowen as 'the untenanted house of Batman, on Batman's Hill, and there made himself as comfortable as circumstances would permit'.[31] However, it took until early 1842 for Charles La Trobe and William Lonsdale to take over Batman's house. Interestingly, the same Benjamin Baxter had been granted the lease of Batman's house and land for £150 a year. La Trobe informed Baxter that he should vacate the land by August 1841. Once the lease expired the property reverted to full ownership of the colonial government. The administrators of Batman's estate were paid £200 in July 1841 by the government for the property.[32] La Trobe indirectly referred to his office on Batman's Hill when he recorded in a memorandum of his journeys between January and April 1844 that he had erected a holiday cottage at Shortland's Bluff (Queenscliff) for his family and visited as frequently 'as circumstances permitted', and that 'by getting off from the Bluff at 4 a.m, riding the 20 m. to Geelong before 7. & then getting on the morning steamer – as I often did this & the following year – I was generally at my office in Melbourne in good time for the dispatch of business'.[33] (For picture, see p.7.)

The humble cottage 'in Little Flinders Street,' the small brick building leased on the corner of William and Little Collins Streets, and the cramped conditions in John Batman's house had all obviously been insufficient as office space whilst La Trobe attended to the issues involved in the governance of the rapidly expanding population of the Port Phillip District. La Trobe may have anticipated the possibility of a purpose-built government office in the near future, for in February 1842 he suggested that once he had moved out, Batman's buildings could be preserved as a colonial museum and library.[34] He also wrote to Governor Gipps recommending that part of Batman's Hill be converted to an experimental farm and botanic garden.[35] None of these suggestions came to fruition.

Government offices 1846

If La Trobe had hopes for a permanent office they were stalled by the economic depression of the early 1840s. The Clerk of Works office in Melbourne prepared a report on the expenditure on public buildings for 1842. There is no mention of an office for the Superintendent in the report and the majority of government buildings commenced in that year were listed as 'unfinished'.[36] By late 1842 Governor Gipps was reluctant to allocate revenue for any public



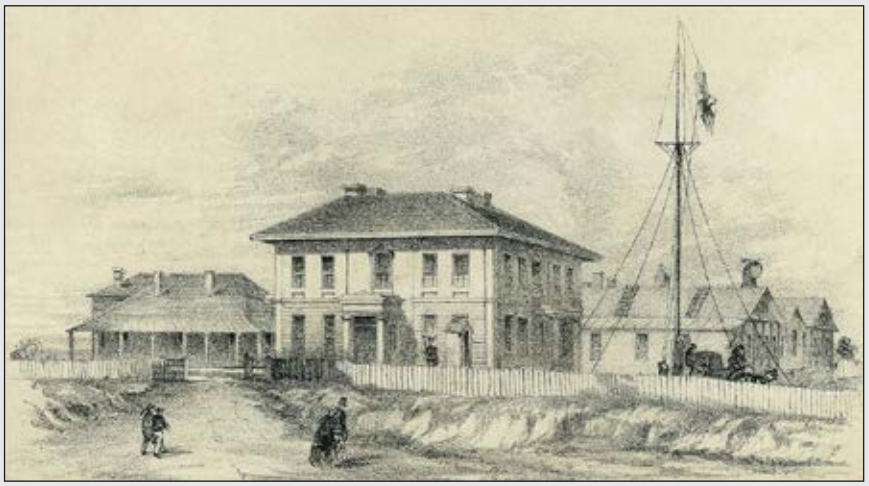
Samuel Thomas Gill, 1818-1880, artist
James Tingle, engraver
Government Offices Melbourne, 1857
Steel engraving, coloured
Pictures Collection, State Library Victoria, H15080
View from William Street, main entrance

buildings and wrote to La Trobe that the state of finances would force him to suspend all public works throughout the colony. Improvement in the economic conditions may have encouraged La Trobe to approach Governor Gipps regarding his predicament, for in April 1843 he sent a request recommending that preparation be made for the erection of public offices for the Superintendent and other departments.[37] Gipps replied a month later that the land fund was completely exhausted and there was only £2,000 in the Treasury in Sydney.[38] In further correspondence in November of 1843 La Trobe appeared to be frustrated and again wrote to Sydney, recording his memorandum as follows:

> The time appears to have arrived when a convenient public office ought to be provided for the Superintendent of the District. Proposed Estimate for a Building including accommodation for the following Departments: Superintendent's, Treasury, Survey, Emigration, & Crown Commissioner. A Public Hospital also greatly needed.[39]

Eventually Gipps agreed to the construction of government offices, but it was not until September 1844 that La Trobe noted that he had a plan of the 'Building for the Superintendent and Treasurer's Offices'. The Clerk of Works, James Rattenbury, had designed a two-storey building to be located in Block 19, Allotments 15 to 19, on the south-east corner of William and Lonsdale Street. After several design changes, the colonial government in Sydney had given its approval.[40] Builder James Webb was awarded the tender and the building was to be constructed of granite and bluestone. An article in the *Argus,* based on the memories of an early settler, recorded that the ceremony of laying the first stone was performed by James Rattenbury on 15 January 1845; and that the structure was finished in twelve months, 'enabling Mr Latrobe [*sic*] to vacate the rabbit warren as it was called, at the foot of Batman's Hill'.[41] Charles La Trobe and William Lonsdale moved to the new government offices in January 1846. The building has been described as having a dignified plain facade with horizontal banded courses on the ground floor and finely cut stone with decorative patterned bands on the floor above, whilst the roof overhung the walls in the Italian fashion.[42] The building had two portico entrances, one facing William Street and the other Lonsdale Street and a sentry box stood in the front courtyard.

The new government offices were the site of a significant event in the history of the Port Phillip District. Following official separation from New South Wales, Charles Joseph La Trobe



Stringer Mason & Co., engraver
Government House & Printing Offices, 1853
Lithograph printed on buff paper
Pictures Collection, State Library Victoria, H18215
View from Lonsdale Street, side entrance

was installed as Lieutenant-Governor of the Colony of Victoria on 15 July 1851 on the steps of the Government Offices building at 11 o'clock in the morning. The *Argus* described the scene which preceded the ceremony with the arrival of troops of the mounted and city police and heads of various government departments. The article then reported that La Trobe appeared at the door 'of the Government House' and Her Majesty's commission was read by Edward Bell, His Excellency's Private Secretary, and Mr La Trobe took the prescribed oaths administered by William Stawell, the newly appointed Attorney-General. After formalities the 'assembled multitude then greeted His Excellency with three cheers, and the band in attendance struck up the national anthem'. Then at the conclusion of the presentation of various addresses, his Excellency held a levee in the building and at three o'clock left the government offices, and in about half-an-hour a large assembly of sight-seers had entirely dispersed.[43]

This elegant substantial colonial building was demolished in the early 1870s. Not only was the demolition a loss to our architectural heritage but also a loss of a tangible link to the government offices where La Trobe carried out his administrative role from the mid-1840s until his departure in 1854. The Supreme Court building was erected in 1874 in its place.

Endnotes

The tiny sketch by Phillip Parker King was reproduced in an oil painting by Joseph Anderson Panton in 1880 (State Library Victoria, H86.27, *La Trobeana*, vol.17, no.2, July 2018, p.37) and in a watercolour and other works by Robert Russell in the 1880s (e.g. lithograph, State Library Victoria, H94.147, *La Trobeana*, vol,19, no.2, July 2020, p.42).

1 L.J. Blake (ed.), *Letters of Charles Joseph La Trobe,* Melbourne: Government of Victoria, 1975, p.12. The La Trobes lived with the Lonsdales for the first few weeks in 1839 whilst their prefabricated cottage was being erected close by on the government paddock; part of the paddock became the La Trobes' property they called *Jolimont.*

2 Cecil Philip Billot, *John Batman: the story of John Batman and the foundation of Melbourne,* Melbourne: Hyland House, 1979, p.110. For a list of the members of the Port Phillip Association, see p.117.

3 Ibid. p.101, John Batman, Journal, 10 May-11 June 1835, p.70, Manuscripts Collection, State Library Victoria, MS13181.

4 *Historical Records of Victoria,* Vol. 1, *Beginnings of Permanent Government* [hereafter *HRV1*], edited by Pauline Jones, Melbourne: Victorian Government Printing Office, 1981, pp.12-14.

5 *Historical Records of Victoria,* Vol. 3, *The Early Development of Melbourne* [hereafter *HRV3*], edited by Michael Cannon and Ian MacFarlane, Melbourne: Victorian Government Printing Office, 1984, pp.22-23.

6 *New South Wales Government Gazette,* 14 September, 1836, no.239, p.709.

7 *HRV1*, p.54.

8 Ibid, p.46.

9 Following surveying by Hoddle in March 1837 the Government Reserve was located in Block 16, and was bounded by Collins, Bourke, King and Spencer Streets.

10 Robert Russell, *Plan shewing the situation of the buildings on the Government Reserve*, *Melbourne, Port Phillip, June 1838*, Map Collection, State Library Victoria, H24529.

11 Ibid (Russell inscribed his 1883 edition of the plan: 'This building was previously occupied by Capn Lonsdale'). Lieutenant, afterwards Captain, George Brunswick Smyth JP was a serving magistrate with Lonsdale.

12 Victorian Heritage Report, https://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/places/66613 (accessed 8 April 2020). The 1837 cottage was removed from Wellington Parade in 1891 and relocated to the sea-side town of Carrum. Surviving sections were eventually rescued by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria). However, plans to rebuild both Lonsdale's and La Trobe's cottages together never eventuated, and the remains of Lonsdale's were inadvertently dispersed (Miles Lewis, 'Jolimont in Context', *La Trobeana*, vol.9, no.2, February 2010, p.4).

13 *HRV1*, pp.29-31.

14 PROV, Inward Correspondence, VPRS 4, Item No. 1837/31, Folder No. 30. (The Secretary of State for the Colonies was Lord Glenelg.)

15 Billot, pp.259-260.

16 PROV, Inward Correspondence, VPRS 19, Item No. 1840/0429 (16 December 1839: Despatch relating to the Estate of the Late John Batman).

17 Garryowen, *The Chronicles of Early Melbourne, 1835 to 1852: historical, anecdotal and personal,* Melbourne: Fergusson & Mitchell, 1888, p.42. Little Flinders Street was renamed Flinders Lane in 1843 (*New South Wales Government Gazette*, 13 October 1843, p.1326 Decision of the Executive Council, Sydney, 21 September 1843)

18 Robert Saunders Webb arrived on the *Stirlingshire* from Sydney on 5 October 1836 to take up the position as Sub-Collector of Customs. In July 1839, he was appointed to a second role as the Sub-Treasurer of the Port Phillip District. His combined salary was £250 a year. As Sub-Treasurer, Webb was responsible for all financial and revenue collection in the Port Phillip district. He is listed as second administrator in the district with La Trobe, *HRV1*, p.136. Webb was removed from his role as Sub-Treasurer in June 1840 (although he retained a position as a customs official). Lonsdale was then appointed as Sub-Treasurer and James Simpson became the Police Magistrate.

19 Dianne Reilly (ed.), *Charles Joseph La Trobe: Australian Notes 1839-1854,* Yarra Glen, Vic.: Tarcoola Press, State Library of Victoria and Boz Publishing, 2006, p.83, Minute, 22 October 1839 ('one room… 3 persons in it, 14 square').

20 Robert Russell, *Map shewing the site of Melbourne and the position of the huts & buildings previous to the foundation of the township by Sir Richard Bourke in 1837,* Map Collection, State Library Victoria. See also Russell's sketch *Settlement Melbourne,* c.1837, Pictures Collection, State Library Victoria, H562.

21 PROV, Inward Correspondence, VPRS 4, Unit 7, Item No.1839/207, Folder No.112.

22 *Australian Notes 1839-1854,* p.235, Memorandum, 11 March 1840.

23 *HRV3*, p.33.

24 William Lonsdale and James Simpson were John Batman's original trustees. They withdrew in June 1839, Patricius William Welsh and Edward Thomas Newton were then appointed.

25 In a facsimile of the engraving *Melbourne from the south side of the Yarra Yarra 1839* (John Adamson, artist; John Carmichael, engraver, 1839; State Library Victoria H9369) the legend added in 1937 misleadingly shows Batman's house as the Superintendent's office. La Trobe did not move to this house until early 1842.

26 *Port Phillip Gazette,* 6 May 1840, p.2.

27 John Barnes, *La Trobe: Traveller Writer Governor,* Canberra: Halstead Press, in association with State Library Victoria and La Trobe University, 2017, p.163, citing *Port Phillip Gazette*, 16 September 1840.

28 Garryowen, p.42.

29 Captain Benjamin Baxter was appointed Clerk of the Bench and Deputy Postmaster in 1837. He acquired John Pascoe Fawkner's first house as the family's home, which was also used as Melbourne's first post office run by his wife Martha (for a picture of the building, see p.17). He soon took up grazing licences in Emerald Hill/St Kilda, at Lower Plenty and at *Carrup Carrup* near Frankston. He was appointed a Commissioner for Crown Lands in 1851. The town of Baxter is named after him.

30 Michael Cannon, *Old Melbourne Town before the Gold Rush,* Main Ridge, Vic.: Loch Haven Books, 1991, p.193.

31 Garryowen, p.42. Garryowen wrote that this establishment was provided for on the estimates of the time. Salaries for the Superintendent, his two clerks and forage for horses & etc. totalled £1,204.

32 *HRV3,* pp.30-36. In response to Governor Gipps' queries about the late John Batman's claim for compensation for improvements he made to his twenty acres of land and his house, Lonsdale valued Batman's whole property at about £400. Lonsdale was also queried about the value of land sold in the immediate neighbourhood in 1837. He replied that the upset price was £150 per acre. Although the Executive Council in Sydney had considered the claim inadmissible, the administrators of Batman's estate requested the amount of £200; this was agreed to and the final amount paid by the government for the property. When Batman's affairs were finally settled practically nothing was left for his surviving family.

33 *Australian Notes*, p.120.

34 Cannon, p.83.

35 PROV, Inward Correspondence, VPRS 19, Item No. 1842/0627.

36 PROV, Inward Correspondence, VPRS 19, Item No. 1842/18885a.

37 *Australian Notes,* p.278, Memorandum, 13 April 1843.

38 Cannon, p.40.

39 *Australian Notes*, p.284, Memorandum, 9 November 1843.

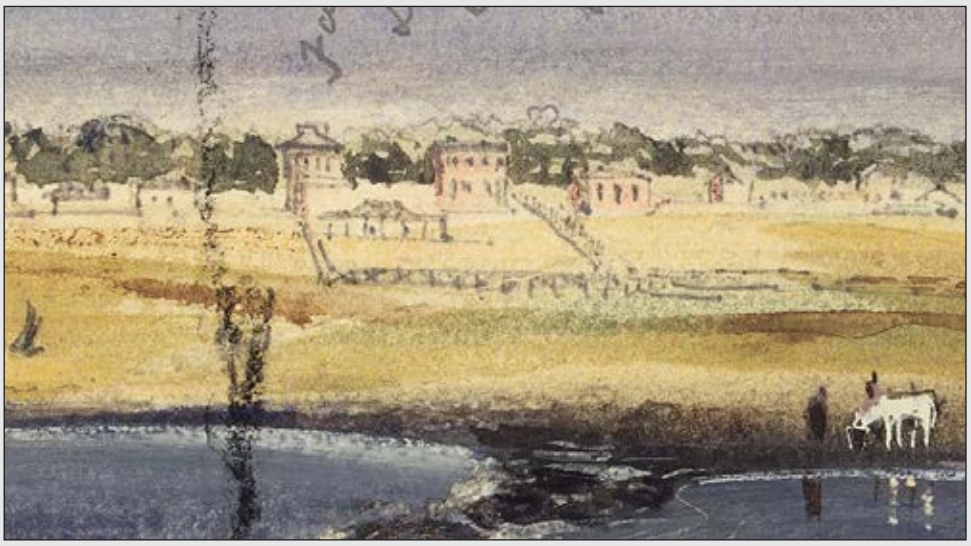
40 Cannon, pp.194-195.

41 *Argus*, 14 May 1927, p.8 (Edward C.O. Howard, 'Lonsdale Street: some early memories').

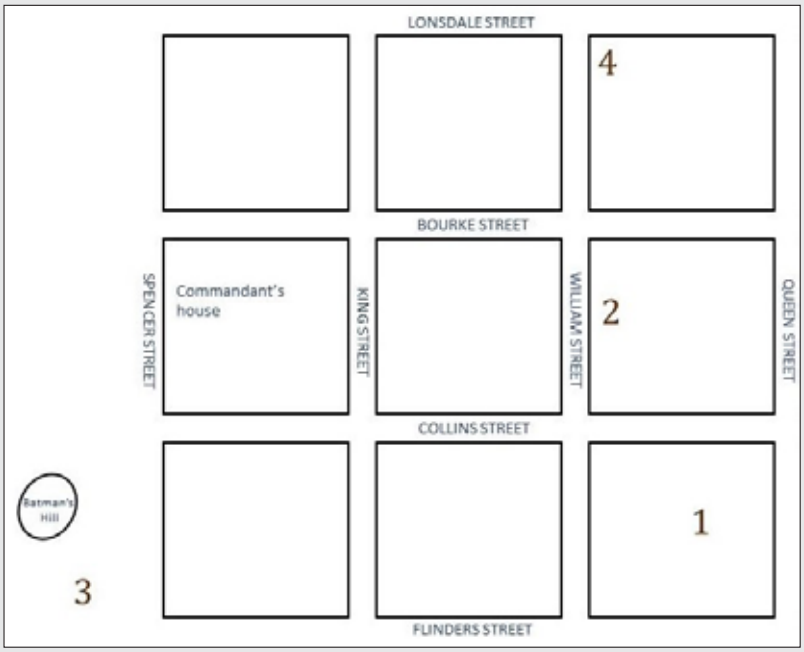
42 George Tibbits and Angela Roennfeldt, *Port Phillip Colonial, 1801-1851: early government buildings and surveys in Victoria; an exhibition at… the State Library of Victoria, 1989*, Clifton Hill, Vic.: Port Phillip Colonial, 1989, p.41.

43 *Argus*, 16 July 1851, p.2 (description of events on the previous day, 15 July 1851).

cont. >>



Robert Russell, 1808–1900, artist
Melbourne from the falls, 1838 (detail)
Watercolour and oil
Pictures Collection, State Library Victoria, H3882
Robert Webb's cottage may be seen directly above the falls, to the right of the long fence



John Botham, illustrator
Position of the four Government Offices Melbourne, 1839–c.1870

Not merely the Magistrate but the Principal Officer of the Government:
William Lonsdale and the foundation of Melbourne, 1836-1839

Dr Fay Woodhouse

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From the time of his arrival in New South Wales in January 1836, the Governor of New South Wales, Sir Richard Bourke, had to consider the question of the illegal settlement of the southern portion of the colony. The Port Phillip District had been unofficially settled by the Hentys in Portland Bay from about 1834, and in 1835, by enthusiastic pastoralists from Van Diemen's Land searching for fertile land on which to graze their sheep and cattle. John Batman and John Fawkner both set out to discover pastures that gave promise of profit and settled illegally on the banks of what is now the Yarra River.[1]

It was clear to the colonial government that steps had to be taken to exert some form of authority over the settlement some called Bearbrass. In May 1836 Bourke sent George Stewart, the police magistrate for Goulburn, to visit the region. The first census taken on 25 May 1836 found 177 people (142 men and 35 women) settled there,[2] with cattle, sheep and horses. He also found about 800 Aboriginal people in the vicinity. There had been recent outrages on the Aboriginal inhabitants with one gruesome murder still unresolved.[3] While Stewart was at the settlement the residents held a meeting, and thirty-one of them signed a petition to Bourke requesting he send a police magistrate to uphold law and order. It was clear to all that something had to be done.

Three months later, within days of receiving imperial authority from the Secretary of State, Lord Glenelg, to formally establish a settlement at Port Phillip, Bourke appointed thirty-six-year old Captain William Lonsdale as Chief Agent of Government, Police Magistrate and Commandant for the Port Phillip District. The appointment came with a salary of £250 per annum plus an additional £100 for outfitting.[4] It was not surprising that William Lonsdale was appointed to this position.

Who was William Lonsdale?

Lonsdale was a privileged young man who possessed a proud family history of military service, honourable experience in the West Indies, England and New South Wales, and the patronage of the Colonial Governor. He was also a man possessing all the prejudices of class and race imbued in the British government and its upper classes. Although not from a titled family, Lonsdale was a gentleman by virtue of his commission in the Army. He had the reputation of a man who followed orders 'to the letter', for an unblemished character and calm temperament.[5]

William Lonsdale's father, Lieutenant James Lonsdale, had served in the 4th Regiment, known as the King's Own, with Sir Richard Bourke. His mother, Jane (née Faunce), came from an English military-legal family from *Sharsted Court* in Kent.[6] He therefore enjoyed powerful family military connections. In short, he was the ideal candidate for the job.

Lonsdale was born at Fort Den Helder, Holland on 2 October 1799. His father had joined the Anglo-Russian Invasion in October, and soon after the birth of their first child the Lonsdale family returned to England in November 1799. William's father later saw action in the Peninsula campaigns of the Napoleonic Wars and, in 1814, he was rendered a quadriplegic from the injuries he sustained. He was pensioned out of the Army at only £100 per year. As the eldest of five children, at the age of only fifteen, William was forced to take on the adult responsibilities of his family.[7]

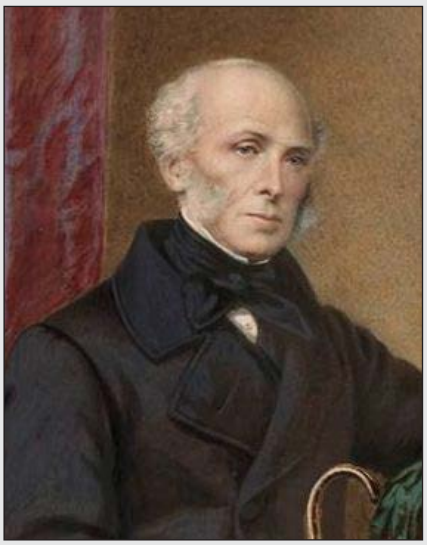
In July 1819, at the age of twenty, Lonsdale joined his father's old regiment, the King's Own. His younger brother also joined this regiment. Possibly due to a lack of family money, he joined as an Ensign, the lowest rank in the service, 'without purchase'. His first five years of service were in the West Indies; in 1824 he was upgraded to the rank of Lieutenant. He was dispatched to Australia on the *Bussorah Merchant* and arrived in Sydney in December 1831 with a detachment of troops guarding convicts. He supervised Governor Sir Charles Darling's chain gangs building roads over the Blue Mountains and the breakwater at Newcastle. In July 1834 he was promoted to the rank of Captain and purchased his commission at a cost of £1,000. He then earned a salary of £100 per annum plus rations and quarters.

Following his promotion and increase in pay, in April 1835 Lonsdale married Martha Smythe, the daughter of a civil engineer from Launceston. In November 1835 he was sent to command an Iron Gang at Parramatta, described as 'gangs of convicts of the worst kind'.[8]

Lonsdale's status as a military man entitled him to serve as a Magistrate and in January 1836 Bourke ensured Lonsdale's name was added to the list of Sydney Magistrates; he began serving as an honorary Justice of the Peace from that time.[9] Lonsdale therefore had experience in policing, management and the justice system.

Lonsdale's appointment in Port Phillip

A proclamation was issued in September 1836 formally authorising the Port Phillip Settlement. However, Governor Bourke's Memorandum

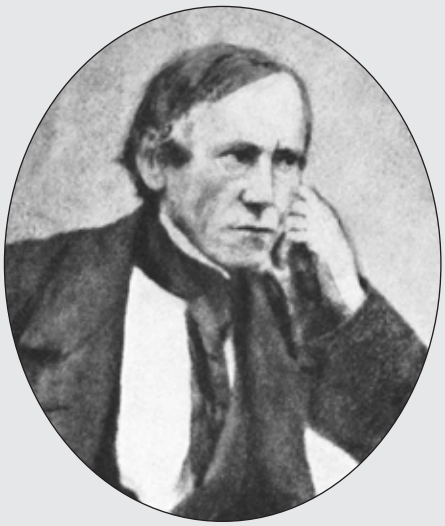


John Botterill, 1817-1881, artist
Captain William Lonsdale, 1866
Watercolour, gouache and gum arabic over albumen silver photograph
Pictures Collection, State Library Victoria, H1 (detail)

to the Colonial Secretary dated 11 September indicates that Lonsdale was to be much more than a Magistrate. In giving Lonsdale the general superintendence of the new settlement, he placed his entire confidence in Lonsdale's intelligence and discretion.[10]

Lonsdale's appointment came in the form of two separate instructions, one military and one civil. The military instructions were standard for such a commission. He was to establish a residence, barracks, commissariat store and huts for constables.[11] As Police Magistrate he was to exercise the ordinary jurisdiction of justice in accordance with the laws of England, as enforced in New South Wales. He was also to submit at the end of every month a confidential report to the Governor himself on every important transaction occurring in the District.[12] Ernest Scott, when he examined Lonsdale's letter books in 1913, could not find monthly reports submitted to Bourke. Instead he found that Lonsdale frequently wrote several letters per day on various subjects, answering questions and reporting on matters as they arose.[13] This was clearly a huge responsibility, and at only £250 per annum. Although he was appointed to the position in Port Phillip in September 1836, he did not resign as Army Captain until March 1837 when he sold his commission. His salary then increased to £300 per annum.

In mid-September, two ships left Sydney: HMS *Rattlesnake* and the brig *Stirlingshire*. It was a large contingent. Lonsdale, his family and servants arrived in Port Phillip on 27 September



Unknown photographer
Robert Russell, c.1844
Frontispiece to Victorian Historical Magazine, January 1919

and anchored on 29 September. Lonsdale wrote to Bourke on 30 September to report that he had arrived at the settlement and had met Batman and Dr Alexander Thomson, the resident surgeon. The *Stirlingshire* carried most of Lonsdale's entourage: three surveyors (led by Robert Russell), two customs officers and three constables, along with their equipment, livestock and supplies, thirty-three soldiers and thirty convicts. Due to bad weather they did not arrive until 5 October.

Lonsdale soon found that there was 'no place on shore to stay'. As he did not want to accommodate his family in tents, while the first buildings were being erected the Lonsdales lived on board the *Rattlesnake.* In November 1836, the Lonsdale family moved from the *Rattlesnake* into his prefabricated house (brought from Sydney) on the Government Reserve. His residence was soon incorrectly known as The Commandant's House (for a picture see p.6). This may also have been due to the fact that Lonsdale was there to take charge of the settlement and part of his title was Commandant for the Port Phillip District. He quickly began exercising his powers over the residents, from an office in a hastily erected building intended as a police office and court house on the reserve.[14]

Bourke's letter directed Lonsdale in the most important duties of the first Magistrate. He was to determine the best site for the settlement, take a census, create the mechanisms for law and order, direct the establishment and construction of government buildings and institutions, and to 'protect the natives'.[15]

The site of Melbourne

Before a town could be laid out, one of Lonsdale's first responsibilities was to survey it to determine the best site for the settlement. At first he was inclined to select Williamstown, but he wrote in detail to Bourke on 21 October 1836 on his choice of the existing site because of the plentiful water supply. He wrote:

> I examined several places for location previously to coming to any determination, and have finally fixed upon the place already chosen as the settlement, and where the greatest number of persons reside. I should have preferred Gellibrand's Point from its proximity to the anchorage, but we could not obtain water, and as there is an abundant supply of it at the settlement, and being the most convenient place for the performance of my civil duties, I have selected it. The only disadvantage is in the delay of getting up the stores from the beach to the settlement.[16]

The letter continues with two more long paragraphs justifying his choice. However, as Ernest Scott notes, the letter shows how cautiously Lonsdale weighs its claim in his mind and supplies a clear statement of his reasons for preferring this site.[17] Scott saw the irony in this instance when comparing it to later choices made by Lonsdale. In the choice of site, Lonsdale was given a free hand. The right choice of site was fundamental to the success or otherwise of the new settlement (especially when compared with the attempted unsuccessful settlement at Sorrento in 1803). Yet in this and other matters, many far more trivial, Lonsdale felt compelled to refer to Sydney for a decision.[18] At the end of the day, while justifying his choice to Bourke, he was really only giving official sanction to the residents' existing choice of site; it was in fact a *fait accompli*.[19]

On the matter of horses and forage, Lonsdale wrote to Bourke pointing out that every other police magistrate had an allowance for forage for his horse, whereas he had kept his horse without a forage allowance for three years. Even so, he still did not explicitly request the money. On the matter of expenses for transport he did request reimbursement for twenty shillings per day to transport goods from Gellibrand Point to the town because 'conveyance by land is very slow'. In light of his record, Scott commented that one must hope that his superiors did not think him reckless.[20] With the choice of site approved, the land then had to be surveyed. However, because the horses

had not yet recovered from the sea journey, Robert Russell and his assistants did not begin surveying until 26 November 1836.

To digress slightly, I would like to consider here whether Lonsdale set the pattern for the future incumbent of the post of Superintendent (and later Lieutenant-Governor) of the Port Phillip District. Bourke had made clear that in some instances Lonsdale had a relatively free hand, although, as we have seen, he did not always take advantage of it. He did not spend money freely and frequently over-worked requests for permission to do one thing or another. When La Trobe began his term as Superintendent under the guidance of Governor Gipps, he was also informed that he must not spend money unduly. I suspect the pattern was set by Lonsdale in 1836.

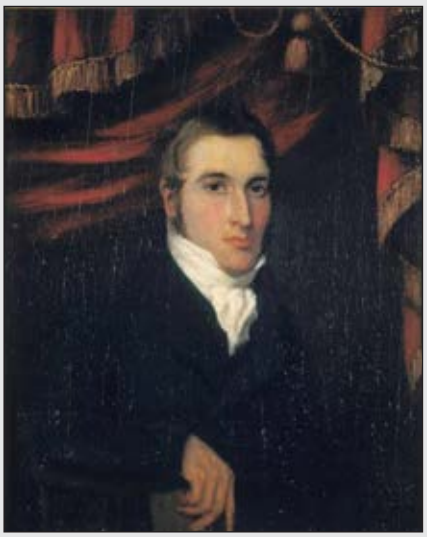
The 1836 census

The first census of the District undertaken by Lonsdale occurred on the nominal date of 9 November 1836, and showed that the population of 224 comprised 186 males and 38 females. All but three of the settlers had come from Van Diemen's Land. Within six weeks of the census being taken, an additional 90 arrived (no detail of male and female distribution). Included in the census were details of the forty-three mainly wattle-and-daub dwellings, huts, tents and awnings. Despite its small population, some 41,332 sheep were grazing on twenty-seven pastoral runs. About 100 acres (40 hectares) of wheat, oats, barley and vegetables were under cultivation. The census extended inland from the township, including to Geelong and Mount Macedon, but did not cover the settlement around Portland, nor at Western Port.[21]

Imposing law and order

Reports of the lawless state of the settlement were confirmed in one of Lonsdale's early reports to the Governor; he wrote that some of the 'lower orders' of settlers had been threatening and intimidating the more respectable inhabitants prior to the arrival of the Government party.[22]

It was essential that some form of police force was quickly established to ensure law and order was imposed and a small force was recruited. In March 1837 the constabulary consisted of one district and two ordinary constables. Their pay was 2s. 3d per day with a military ration. By October 1837 the force had increased to seven but, according to his report, one was ill, one had gone to Sydney on escort, one was in charge of the gaol, one was in search of runaways and only three remained



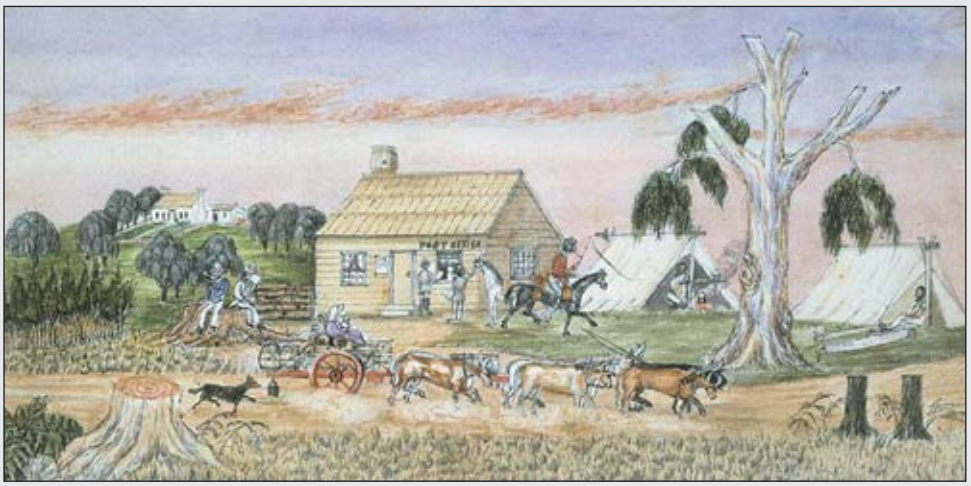
Unknown artist
Robert Hoddle, c.1830
Oil on panel
Pictures Collection, State Library Victoria, H4332

at the settlement on proper constabulary duty. Lonsdale also needed mounted police, and some were sent from Sydney in 1838. Initially they were not required to wear a uniform but Lonsdale soon wrote to Sydney requesting boots, blue jackets, red waistcoats and white trousers to be issued to the select group of policemen. He was a military man after all, and enjoyed the accoutrements of the service.

The government labour force (convicts) sent to Port Phillip was very small. Lonsdale quickly saw that he had not been assigned enough labourers to carry out all the work required. He wrote to the Governor requesting double the number of men. Of equal concern was the fact that the men sent to Port Phillip were a troublesome lot, absconding, brawling and causing trouble; the settlement clearly needed a gaol. He wrote to the Governor requesting two or three wooden houses to lock the 'worst characters' away from the other men. Punishments for offences were, as Ernest Scott put it, 'barbarously severe' with men receiving fifty lashes for misdemeanours and the 'scourger' was kept busy.[23] Prisoners escaped regularly, and the small police force spent much time looking for them. It often took weeks to recapture them. They were then sent to Sydney for trial.

Buildings, construction and surveying

It was Lonsdale's responsibility to choose the location for a government compound. It was soon known as the Government Reserve and the site chosen was bounded by the future Bourke, King, Collins and Spencer Streets.



Wilbraham Frederick Evelyn Liardet, 1799-1878, artist
The first post office [1875]
Watercolour with pen and ink and pencil: view of c.1841
Pictures Collection, State Library Victoria, H28250/2
John Pascoe Fawkner's first house (1835)

The surveyors, customs officials, the thirty soldiers and convicts were all housed on this site in prefabricated buildings brought from Sydney, or wattle-and-daub huts built on site.[24] As well as Lonsdale's own house, the buildings included prisoners' barracks, a temporary hospital, military barracks, a commissariat store and an assortment of tiny cottages and tents for government officials. Once the buildings were erected, Lonsdale then directed the convicts to begin digging out the streets. This required the felling of a large number of trees and the removal of stumps. Most of the convicts in the first detachment from Sydney were assigned as road gangs to carry out this work.

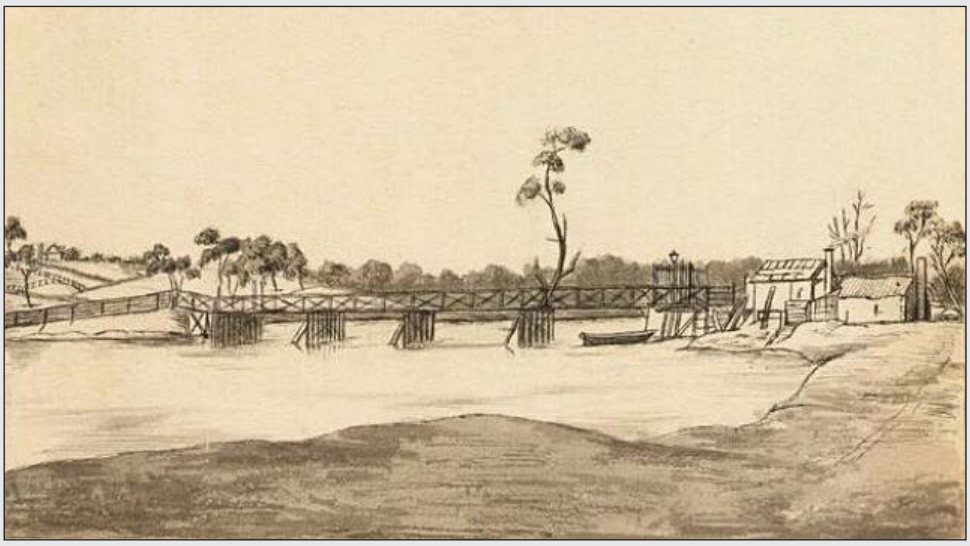
The survey of the district (mapping the bay and outlying areas) had not begun until the end of November and the administration was keen to conduct the first land sales. From his arrival in Port Phillip in 1836, Robert Russell and William Lonsdale were at loggerheads. Russell was soon accused of inactivity in his task. Lonsdale and Bourke were both unhappy with the slow progress of the survey. Bourke therefore decided to visit the Port Phillip District to see it for himself. Accompanied by Robert Hoddle, he arrived on 4 March 1837. After assessing the work carried out to date, Russell was soon stood down as surveyor, while Hoddle and Bourke worked together on the first plans of the settlement based on Russell's original map.

Bourke named 'Melbourne' in honour of the British Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne. He also named the nearby port 'William's Town' after King William IV and 'Hobson's Bay' after the captain of HMS *Rattlesnake*, William Hobson. Bourke chose many 'Whig names' for Melbourne's streets: William for the King, Russell for the Secretary of State Lord Russell, Stephen for the Under-Secretary of State,[25] and Spring for Thomas Spring-Rice, the Whig member for Limerick. Lonsdale Street was, of course, named for Captain Lonsdale.[26] Lonsdale's first letter dated from 'Melbourne' was written on 11 March 1837.[27]

Although Hoddle took over from Russell as Chief Surveyor, Lonsdale found that Hoddle was also difficult to deal with. Hoddle, like Russell, would not acknowledge Lonsdale's authority. This destabilised his authority over the District. In one letter to Bourke, Lonsdale declared that he believed he should be left with only the duties of the Police Magistrate and all other duties (such as supervising the surveyors and the missionary, George Langhorne, his nephew[28]) should be taken on by someone else.[29]

Unhappy with the slow progress of the survey and the lack of accommodation generally in the settlement, Lonsdale must have been doubly frustrated when the slow trickle of immigrants to Port Phillip became a flood: he was required to find accommodation for them. This was not easy and many of the enthusiastic immigrants from the British Isles, after a long and dangerous sea voyage, unhappily found 'no Eldorado' when they arrived in Melbourne.[30] At best the only accommodation was in a tent city.

In 1838 a regular overland mail service, essential for communication between Sydney and Melbourne, came into being. The first post



Unknown artist
Bridge over the Yarra, 1850
Pen and ink, and ink wash on cream paper
Pictures Collection, State Library Victoria, H5011
Balbirnie's wooden toll bridge constructed 1845 near Swanston Street

office was a crude bark hut in Flinders Street. In the immigrant city the post office provided the main means of communication. Settlers eagerly awaited letters bringing news of family and friends on the other side of the world.[31] Lonsdale often waited patiently for letters from his commander in Sydney. In the same year permission to operate the first ferry across the Yarra was granted but it was clear a bridge across the falls was required. A government punt was inaugurated at a cost of £150 but a bridge was not erected during Lonsdale's period.[32] Balbirnie's wooden toll-bridge opened in 1845.[33]

John Pascoe Fawkner, one of the original settlers, quickly set himself up as a publican and in 1838 as a newspaper owner. His *Melbourne Advertiser* was handwritten on four pages of foolscap for nine editions until a press and type arrived from Van Diemen's Land; it was then printed weekly until suppressed because he had no licence. After establishing the regulations around the publication of newspapers, Lonsdale made application to the Colonial Office in Sydney for permission for Fawkner to publish. In February 1839, with a licence, he began the *Port Phillip Patriot and Melbourne Advertiser*; this later became a daily.[34]

Protecting the Aboriginal inhabitants

One of the most important aspects of Lonsdale's work was his duty to protect the Aboriginal inhabitants 'from any manner of wrong'. He was a representative of the colonial government 'most anxious to maintain friendly intercourse with them, and to improve by all practical means their moral and social condition'. In this instance he was directed to employ William Buckley as an interpreter who would liaise with the Aboriginal people.[35]

Buckley was known as the 'wild white man' who had lived for thirty years with the Aboriginal people between today's Point Lonsdale, Geelong and Ballarat. Before he was transported as a convict to Australia on HMS *Calcutta* in 1803, he had also been a private in the King's Own Regiment.[36] Buckley was described by newspaper reports at the time as 'a useful character', stoutly built with an enormous frame and about six and a half feet (1.98 metres) tall.[37] However, it was hardly a surprise that Buckley proved to be an unsatisfactory choice. After one year, he resigned his post. He left Port Phillip and went to live in Van Diemen's Land where he died in 1856.

In January 1837 the Church of England opened a mission on a site near the current Botanic Gardens, with the Reverend George Langhorne in charge. He was officially styled 'Missionary to the Aborigines' and was permitted to draw food and clothing for his people from the Government store. Langhorne did not see eye to eye with Lonsdale on the line of authority. Lonsdale believed Langhorne was subverting his authority and when writing to Bourke, reported that Langhorne 'assumes a tone which is subversive of all order' and confirmed with Bourke that 'he is under my superintendence'.[38]

Unknown photographer
Rev. George Langhorne, c.1870–c.1887
Pictures Collection, State Library Victoria, H2008.93/6

Langhorne, like Russell and Hoddle, refused to take orders from Lonsdale. In particular Lonsdale was incensed that Langhorne had sent a report direct to Bourke instead of sending it via his own office. He wrote to the Chief Secretary in Sydney that: 'you will be good enough to solicit His Excellency the Governor to make him sensible' of this fact.[39] He felt 'very much inclined to suspend him from his duty'. Instead, he allowed Langhorne to continue with his work and it appears that he quickly lost interest in the protection of Aboriginal people. In the two years since he had been in Port Phillip, both Buckley and Langhorne's methods of handling the Aboriginal people had proved to be failures. In early 1839, the Secretary of State for the Colonies insisted that a protectorate be established and George Augustus Robinson was appointed the Protector of Aboriginals. Because Charles La Trobe took up his appointment as Superintendent of the Port Phillip District in October 1839, Lonsdale had only a few months' experience dealing with Robinson.

As well as undertaking his long list of civil duties, Lonsdale participated in the social life of Melbourne. He chaired in 1839 the first meeting of the Melbourne Mechanics' Institution, later the Melbourne Athenaeum, and was elected its first President. In the same year he became a founding member of the Melbourne Club, although he did not take up his membership until 1851.

Between 1836 and 1839 Lonsdale held the position of Police Magistrate. In 1840, after La Trobe's arrival, he was appointed Sub-Treasurer; from October 1846 to February 1847 he acted as Superintendent of Port Phillip while La Trobe was absent in Van Diemen's Land. Following separation from New South Wales in 1851 he became the first Colonial Secretary for two years, and then Colonial Treasurer, a position he retained until 1854 when he took extended leave and left for England. He remained there until his death in London in 1864.

How was Lonsdale assessed by his peers and historians?

William Lonsdale was promoted to the very responsible and, I think, somewhat daunting position of Chief Agent of Government, Police Magistrate and Commandant for the Port Phillip region at the relatively young age of thirty-six. In fact, he had more responsibility than La Trobe when he arrived in 1839. Lonsdale carried out his duties efficiently and successfully brought law and order to the district; he oversaw the construction of buildings; he inaugurated institutions and took a leading role in the social fabric of the new settlement.

Lonsdale's champion, Sir Richard Bourke, described him as a man of great ability and zeal. He wrote 'through his activity and discretion, the comfort of the settlers, and the preservation of good order in the district, has been fully provided for'.[40] Governor Sir George Gipps, Bourke's successor, also held him in high esteem. In a despatch of 1840, he spoke of Lonsdale of as having 'given great satisfaction'.

Lieutenant-Governor Charles La Trobe held him in high esteem and considerable affection, describing him as reliable, conscientious and unpretentious. La Trobe and Lonsdale both departed the colony in 1854. They regularly visited each other once back in England.[41] In a critical assessment, Ernest Scott wrote: 'He worked too hard to be ever accused of doing too little, and his superiors in Sydney never had to complain that he did more than he was warranted in doing'.[42]

In the twentieth century, soon after the (Royal) Historical Society was formed, historians began documenting Lonsdale's work in Victoria. Between 1915 and 2010, fifty-four articles about Lonsdale's life and times were published in the Society's journal. These include: the choice of the site of Melbourne, the foundation of Melbourne, his administration, law under his rule, issuing of hotel licences, early defences, his quarterly returns and abstracts of expenditure, his staff, his official correspondence and surveys, coal at Western Port, on Fawkner and Batman, as Police Magistrate, his relationship with

La Trobe, the first church, the postal service, newspaper attacks, his control of financial affairs, as first president of the Melbourne Mechanics' Institution and his later career.

The earliest critique was made by Professor Ernest Scott who wrote in 1915 on his role in the foundation of Melbourne and in 1918 on his administration. With access to Lonsdale's letter books, he considered the 500 letters as a great source of 'fresh information' because at that stage they had not been used for historical purposes.[43] He frequently interpreted Lonsdale's decisions as acquiescing to the Governor in Sydney. One case in point was in 1837 after Bourke had named the streets of Melbourne; Lonsdale was reluctant to name Melbourne's laneways. Scott observed: 'In so small a matter it might have been supposed that he could take action himself; but evidently he did not feel free to do so'.[44]

B.R. Penny's *Australian Dictionary of Biography* entry concludes that the most noteworthy years of Lonsdale's long public career were from 1836 to 1839 when he supervised the founding of the new settlement at Port Phillip. He wrote: 'Lonsdale contributed by conscientiously following instructions from Sydney and referring all decisions to his superiors'. There were many examples of his deference to his superiors. He was, after all, a regimental officer.

Former Chief Stipendiary Magistrate, William Cuthill, wrote in 1977 on Lonsdale's performance as a Magistrate and does not offer an opinion on his success or otherwise in the role.[45] Michael Cannon in *Old Melbourne before the Gold Rush,* proposes that he ruled with considerable self-restraint, accepting the system as it was, supervising Melbourne's growth while showing little vision. He remained a faithful servant of the Sydney government and its policies.[46]

It is clear that Lonsdale was a high-minded, conscientious, diligent officer, who succeeded in a very difficult job. By all accounts, he was also a modest, unassuming, hard-working officer, with a high sense of duty and an unsparing devotion to it.[47] When I first investigated his role in connection with Russell, I found him to be a rather bland character who, as I have discussed, was happy to play by the rules and not venture very much outside them. In my short survey of Lonsdale and his work, this picture of him has been confirmed. What I have found most interesting were the conflicts he had with other strong characters, such as Russell, Hoddle and Langhorne, and how he handled them.

William Lonsdale remains one of Victoria's most famous members of the colonial magisterial fraternity and Lonsdale Street is a daily reminder of William Lonsdale and his input into the development of early Melbourne.

Endnotes

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3 *New South Wales Government Gazette*, 1836, p.395.

4 Scott, p.101; James Theodore Ivan Rangelov, 'The Port Phillip Magistrates, 1835-1851', Thesis (PhD), Victoria University, 2005, p.189; Max Waugh, *Forgotten Hero: Richard Bourke Irish-born Governor of New South Wales 1831-1837*, North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2005, p.111.

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9 *New South Wales Government Gazette*, 6 January 1836, p.1, List of Justices of the Peace.

10 *HRV1*, pp.45-46, Governor's Memorandum to Colonial Secretary, 11 September 1836.

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12 Rangelov, p.193; Civil Instructions to Lonsdale, 14 September 1836.

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14 *HRV1,* p.84, William Lonsdale to William Hunter, 21 October 1836.

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35 *HRV1,* p.53, Civil Instructions to Lonsdale.

36 Ernest Scott, 'The Administration of Captain Lonsdale', *Victorian Historical Magazine*, vol.6, no. 4, September 1918, p.146.

37 Waugh, p.112.

38 B.R. Penny, 'Lonsdale, William (1799–1864)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (accessed online 2 September 2020).

39 Scott (1918), p.149.

40 Scott, p.116.

41 L.J. Blake (ed.), *Letters of Charles Joseph La Trobe,* Melbourne: Government of Victoria, 1975, pp.47, 54.

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43 Scott, p.97.

44 Ibid, p.111.

45 William J. Cuthill, 'Some Aspects of the Law under Lonsdale', *Victorian Historical Journal,* vol. 48, no.1, February 1977, pp. 42-43.

46 Michael Cannon, *Old Melbourne Town before the Gold Rushes*, Main Ridge, Vic.: Loch Haven Books, 1991, p.31.

47 Scott (1918), pp.158-159.

The Governor, the Superintendent and his Carriage

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.

On 2 August 1846 Sir Charles Augustus FitzRoy landed in Sydney to replace the ailing Sir George Gipps as governor of the colony of New South Wales, and lost no time in beginning his administration the next day.[1] At Port Phillip, which was distant three or more days sailing, Superintendent La Trobe waited three weeks before going up to make formal presentation to his new superior. He noted some details of the voyage but nothing after 'Reaching Sydney Cove 6 p.m., 27th August'.[2] The relationship between Governor and Superintendent was never as close or supportive as La Trobe's had been with Gipps, and this was during a time when local agitation simmered and occasionally surged over policy concerning pastoral leases, separation from New South Wales, and resumption of government immigration.[3]

It was nearly three years into his term of office before Governor FitzRoy recognised the governor-general aspect of his position by visiting Port Phillip and the other southern colonies, South Australia and Van Diemen's Land. For all that, he gave only brief notice of his intention, at least according to newspaper reports. The *Port Phillip Gazette* editorialised on 5 March 1849:

> We shall be glad and proud to see Sir Charles FitzRoy upon Port Phillip ground, but we regret that he should have announced his visit as being to the Superintendent instead of being paid as a compliment to the district. This fact will place a large number of the community in a very peculiar position, for with every desire to do justice to the Representative of Royalty, feelings of delicacy may prevent them from intruding upon the Superintendent and his visitors.[4]

In the event the week-long visit from 12 to 20 March was replete, if not crammed, with formal public occasions at both Melbourne and Geelong.

The Governor and his suite, including his son George as private secretary and Aide-de-Camp Lieutenant Masters, arrived on HMS *Havannah*, the Royal Navy's gunship then stationed in the region. Adverse winds meant its arrival was delayed until late in the afternoon, the town being alerted by a salute from the guns stationed on Batman's Hill. Sir Charles was in a boat lowered from the *Havannah* at its anchorage off what is now Port Melbourne, and met half way to the shore by a Customs boat carrying the Superintendent, who then joined the Governor and his party to land at the pier:

> Horses having been procured... they started for town, escorted by a considerable party of both horse and foot. The increasing darkness

Johnstone, O'Shannessy & Co, photographer
Sir Charles FitzRoy, 1866 (detail)
Watercolour, gouache and gum arabic over albumen silver photograph
Pictures Collection, State Library Victoria, H5297
Based on the oil portrait by Richard Buckner 1855 held at Government House, Sydney

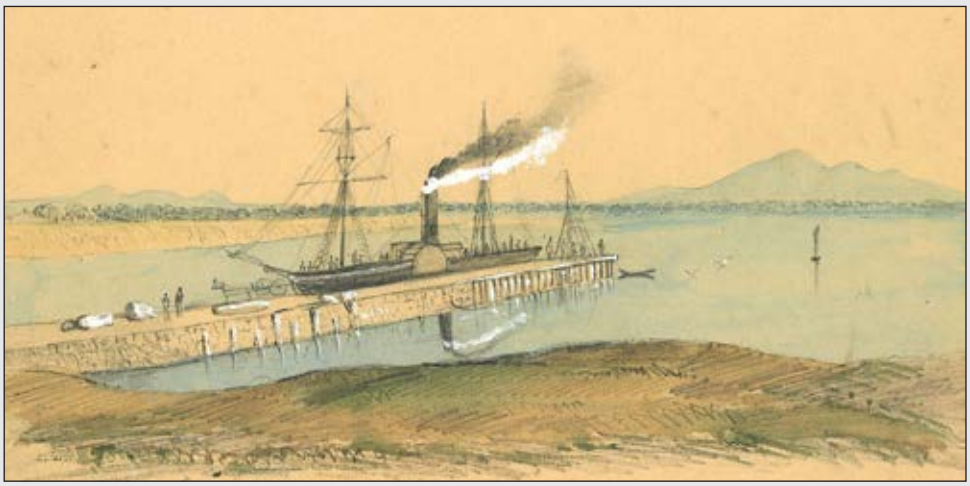
> prevented... as large an attendance as would otherwise have greeted... the representative of Her Majesty, but considerable numbers had collected at the bridge, where the constabulary were drawn up, and a very large crowd assembled in the front of the Royal Hotel, where rooms had been reserved [for the vice-regal party].[5]

The following day was devoted to an 'examination of the city and its environs' escorted by the Superintendent, Melbourne's mayor W.M. Bell and other officials, both civil and military. In the evening the Governor was entertained to dinner at La Trobe's *Jolimont* residence along with a 'select party' that included the mayor and Resident Judge William A'Beckett. At about half-past ten, the Governor, his son and Captain Erskine from the *Havannah* were being escorted back to the Royal Hotel in the La Trobe coach when the 'horses took fright opposite the Mechanics' Institution, owing to an urchin having discharged a squib, and started off at full speed down Collins-street'. The coachman remained in control until near the Melbourne Club premises on the rise west from Elizabeth Street, where the carriage wheels 'came in contact with a heap of stones' left by municipal workmen who had been cutting down the level of the roadway. The carriage was 'upset, throwing the inmates out with violence', while the horses freed from the vehicle, but with the broken carriage pole still between them, pursued an erratic course back into Elizabeth Street, smashing in the window of a dealer's shop and knocking down two people further on before they were ultimately 'secured by Mr Thomas Morrow at the head of Queen Street' after one horse had tripped and fallen. Morrow ran the Crown Inn livery stables in Lonsdale Street. Meanwhile, in Collins Street it was considered 'almost a miracle' that the carriage occupants escaped with just shock and bruising, and the coachman with some cuts as well, since the vehicle itself was 'much shattered'.[6]

The accident would have stirred a deeper trauma. On 7 December 1847 while driving in the grounds of Government House at Parramatta with his wife and some associates, FitzRoy's own carriage had overturned, killing Lady Mary outright, while his aide-de-camp died later from injuries. The Governor suffered severe leg injuries, but greater hurt was inflicted through the loss of his wife 'on whose loyalty and charm he had greatly depended'. It was exacerbated in that he, who was considered 'an excellent whip', had been driving the vehicle.[7] Knowing of that tragedy, La Trobe would have felt dismay, if not mortification, along with the physical bruising from the Collins Street accident. Nevertheless, to the public eye the Governor's visit continued with only minor modification.

At 11 a.m. on the following day, Wednesday 14 March, His Excellency received addresses on behalf of the Church of England, Melbourne Council, the Mechanics' Institution and the Australian Independent Order of Oddfellows 'to all of which he returned courteous replies'. These and other formal addresses and replies were later published in the *Government Gazette*.[8] The reception was followed by a 'well attended' levee in the ballroom of the Royal Hotel. There had been plans for the party to go 'overland by tandem' to Geelong immediately after the levee, but that was foiled by the carriage accident. It is quite possible that La Trobe's vehicle was to have been in the caravan. Instead on Thursday morning the Governor took the bay steamer *Thames* to Geelong, returning by the *Vesta* on Saturday after a similar tour of inspection, reception and levee at Port Phillip's second urban centre.[9]

On Sunday he attended divine service at St James' with Bishop Perry officiating. Monday was another of his 'public days' notified by the Union Jack flying high on the flagstaff at the signal station. Deputations were received on matters of public interest ranging from Melbourne's water supply and extending the town boundaries to the anti-transportation movement. Such deputations were an echo of the ancient right of subjects to petition the



The jetty, Corio, c.1849
Pencil, watercolour and chinese white on tinted paper
Pictures Collection, State Library Victoria, H41.808
Signed I.E.W., a pupil of George Alexander Gilbert
Jetty at Corio Bay, Geelong, You Yangs Range in the distance

monarch directly if they felt injured or ignored by the parliament of the day. Port Phillipians felt deeply that the Legislative Council in Sydney, a mix of appointed and elected members, ignored their needs to the community's detriment. After hearing the deputations, the Governor went to inspect some institutions for the public good that had been accomplished – the Hospital, the Post Office and the Mechanics' Institution. Then in the afternoon he rode out to the new Lunatic Asylum at Yarra Bend, later the site of the Fairfield Infectious Diseases Hospital, visiting on the way the site of the proposed waterworks. In the evening he dined with the Melbourne Club.

There were further deputations on Tuesday, mostly from people aggrieved by personal issues with government regulation. Cases that the *Argus* chose to mention were J.P. Fawkner's claim for legal costs in his clash with Major St John and, under the heading 'Blatherum and the Governor', Joseph William Hooson's claim 'for compensation for his fruitless Gipps Land poundkeeping.'[10] Hooson had been in Melbourne since 1837 initially as police constable in the first contingent of appointees sent down from Sydney with William Lonsdale. Garryowen's *Chronicles of Early Melbourne* recalled the ludicrous farce of Hooson leading the inaugural parade of the town council in 1842, as well as some later positions found for the 'half-cranky customer'.[11]

In the late afternoon, the Governor dined with Bishop Perry and his wife who were then lodged in La Trobe's *Upper Jolimont*; so the Superintendent and Madame La Trobe would have been of the party, as would others of the 'select' group. From thence he was driven to a public subscription ball at the Royal Hotel which was described as 'a very grand affair, and being less exclusive than customary went off with great *éclat*.'[12] On Wednesday, 'His Excellency embarked [on the *Havannah*], a large concourse of spectators accompanying him to the Prince's Bridge,[13] where the black police under the command of Captain Dana, and the City Police under the command of the Acting Chief Constable, were assembled to receive him'.[14] In the evening, he entertained a 'select party' to dinner on board, and next morning 'the ship proceeded on her voyage' to Adelaide.

On the whole, there was much satisfaction with the visit. The *Melbourne Daily News* commented that:

> His Excellency, however casual his observation, must have been struck with the astonishing progress and prosperity of a Province of little more than ten years old. The large population and thriving appearance of the two principal towns are no insufficient proofs of the unprecedented advancement to wealth and importance which has been accomplished... and that too under every drawback that an hostile and rapacious government could devise... But if His Excellency be surprised at these appearances, he must be equally astonished at the ungrateful and unprincipled parsimony of the Sydney Legislature towards Port Phillip.[15]

Samuel Thomas Gill, 1818-1880, artist
Campbell & Fergusson, lithographer
Criterion Hotel, Collins Street. Melbourne, 1854
Coloured lithograph
Pictures Collection, State Library Victoria, H86.1/1
Located on the south side of Collins Street between Elizabeth and Queen Streets, this was formerly the Royal Hotel, but depicted in its post-1853 renovated style, with stuccoed facade and fake top storey frontage added by an American partnership and renamed the Criterion. The Melbourne Town Council held its initial meetings at the Royal before moving to the Mechanics' Institution.

The urge for separation and self-government was plainly never far below the surface at Port Phillip. Equally apparent is the antipathy towards Sydney, a rivalry which has persisted. Carriage accident notwithstanding, Governor FitzRoy's pleasing visit had a further off-shoot. It encouraged the surging municipal movement which led to Gipps Ward of the City Council being subdivided in 1850, with the north-eastern area that encompassed the burgeoning residential quarter of Newtown being named Fitzroy Ward. From 1859 until the radical reshaping of local government in the 1990s that was the territory of the locally self-governing City of Fitzroy.

Endnotes

1 John M. Ward, 'FitzRoy, Sir Charles Augustus (1796-1858), *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol.1, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1966, pp.384-389.

2 Dianne Reilly (ed.), *Charles Joseph La Trobe: Australian Notes 1839-1854*, *Yarra Glen, Vic.*: Tarcoola Press, in association with the State Library of Victoria and Boz Publishing, 2006, p.152.

3 La Trobe's biographers Dianne Reilly Drury (2006) and John Barnes (2017) have slightly different interpretations of the relationship.

4 *Port Phillip Gazette,* 5 March 1849, p.2.

5 *Argus*, 13 March 1849, p.2.

6 Ibid, 16 March 1849, p.2; Garryowen, *Chronicles of Early Melbourne, 1835 to 1852: historical, anecdotal and personal*, Melbourne: Fergusson and Mitchell, 1888, pp.224-225.

7 Ward. p.385.

8 *Port Phillip Government Gazette,* 21 March 1849, pp.217-222.

9 *Argus*, 16 March 1849, p.2 has the fullest account, with a list of levee attendees; *Argus*, 20 March 1849, p.2 has a similar account for the Geelong visit, which the *Geelong Advertiser* covered in greater detail.

10 *Argus*, 23 March 1849, p.2.

11 Garryowen, pp.265-269.

12 *Argus*, 23 March 1849, p.2.

13 The Prince's Bridge was under construction and after lengthy work on the earthwork approaches was opened on 15 November 1850. Balbirnie's wooden toll-bridge was in use at the time of the Governor's visit; for a picture see p.18.

14 *Argus*, 23 March 1849, p.2.

15 *Melbourne Daily News*, 19 March 1849, p.2.

William Swainson:
La Trobe's other botanical appointment

By Dr John Dwyer

John Dwyer worked in the law for some forty years, including twenty years practice as a leading QC. He has an MA in philosophy, and is a qualified horticulturist from Burnley College with a PhD on Weeds in Victorian Landscapes. Intrigued by the natural history of weeds, John writes about them and their place in our history, and our relationship with nature in gardens and landscapes. His publications include articles about weeds and landscape, and his book Weeds, Plants and People was published in 2016.

Botanical science was in its infancy in the 1840s and 1850s, and although many educated men and women had a keen interest in natural history, including plants – and in the new flora of Australia in particular – botanical scientists were 'rare birds'. Ferdinand Mueller (1825-1896), with his PhD from the University of Kiel in Germany, was a man of the new age in scientific botany. His appointment in January 1853 as Government Botanist was one of La Trobe's achievements. La Trobe's earlier appointment in 1852, of William Swainson FRS, FLS (1789-1855), reflected the old approach to natural history. Lynn Barber saw Swainson as the personification of what she called 'the heyday of natural history'.[1] Swainson's *A Preliminary Discourse on the Study of Natural History*, published in 1834, claimed that:

> Natural history has this peculiar advantage – that it can be prosecuted, in one shape or another, by almost every body, and under every ordinary circumstance. Of all the sciences, it is that which requires, in most of its departments, the fewest materials. It is as much within the reach of the cottager as of the professor; or rather, we should say, it embraces questions which can be solved by the former, just as well, and frequently much better, than by the latter.[2]

La Trobe had a great interest in all aspects of natural history. We may recall Washington Irving's description of the young La Trobe, as 'a man of a thousand occupations: a botanist, a geologist, a hunter of beetles and butterflies.'[3] Mueller described him in a letter to Sir William Hooker, director of Britain's National Herbarium at Kew, as 'our scientific Governor.'[4] La Trobe's correspondence over some years with the Van Diemen's Land botanist and public servant Ronald Campbell Gunn (1808-1881) demonstrates that interest, as does the assessment of Victorian pastoralist and plant collector, John Robertson (1803-1862) of *Wando Vale* near Casterton in a letter to Sir William Hooker in November 1854: 'With the exception of the late Mr Robert Lawrence, Mr Ronald Gunn, and our much-respected ex-Governor, Mr La Trobe, I never met any individual resident who knew anything more about Australian plants than myself.'[5]

Establishing the Botanic Gardens

The Royal Botanic Gardens, as they have been known since 1958, are a significant part of La Trobe's cultural legacy. The Botanic Gardens project had begun, at the urging of the Melbourne Town Council, with the reservation of a fifty-acre (twenty-hectare) site on Batman's Hill in 1843.[6] That proposal lapsed, but in 1845 the mayor Dr (later Sir) Charles Nicholson led public support for establishing a Botanic Garden.

A committee was formed with La Trobe in the chair. He was closely involved in selecting the site south of the Yarra, describing it, in his letter of December 1845 to the town clerk forwarding the committee's recommendation, as 'a veritable Garden of Eden.'[7] With Governor Gipps' somewhat grudging approval, the site was reserved and funds allocated in 1846. John Arthur (1804-1849) was appointed superintendent almost before the gardens had been officially approved.[8] The project was a key element in what Dianne Reilly Drury has called La Trobe's 'civilizing mission.'[9]

Joseph Maiden (1859-1925), director of the Sydney Botanic Gardens from 1896 to 1924, wrote of La Trobe's close involvement:

> He founded the Melbourne Botanic Gardens, selecting the site and educating public opinion on the subject. He took the warmest interest in the early development of the Garden, visiting it frequently – 'several times a week' says one of my informants. He appointed the first three Curators – Arthur, Dallachy and Mueller. His interest was not merely of the official kind; he had a real knowledge of plants, exotic and native; some who knew him personally agree on this.[10]

Maiden's statement that La Trobe appointed Mueller Curator of the Botanic Gardens is incorrect. Mueller was appointed Government Botanist by La Trobe, but only became Director of the Gardens in 1857, when La Trobe had left the colony.

The *Reports on the Botanical Gardens, Melbourne* of 1851 and 1852 are over Henry Ginn's name as Secretary. Ginn (1818-1892) was a significant figure in La Trobe's administration and deserves to be better known. Emigrating from London in 1841, he was Clerk of Works in New South Wales until displaced in the economies of 1843. Governor Gipps had a good opinion of him. In a letter to La Trobe he described Ginn as 'the ablest architect in Sydney,'[11] appointing him Clerk of Works for the Port Phillip District in 1846. Ginn supervised the construction of the Cape Otway lighthouse, which was built in response to a public outcry following the disastrous wreck of the *Cataraqui* in 1845, and completed in August 1848.[12] He remained Clerk of Works until Separation when he was appointed Victoria's Colonial Architect, and became first president of the Association of Architects.[13]

La Trobe appointed Ginn as Secretary to the Botanic Gardens Committee, apparently soon after Ginn's arrival in Port Phillip. His initial landscape design dated April 1856 is reproduced in Richard Pescott's history of the gardens.[14] Pescott was regrettably vague about Ginn, but says that the first plantings of trees (*Ulmus procera*) in the gardens was done by Arthur, the first Superintendent, 'under the direction of and according to the plan of the colonial architect' in the winter of 1846. They are believed to be the large elms known today as 'Arthur's Elms' on the Tennyson Lawn.[15]

Edward Francis Finden, 1791-1857, artist
Alexander Mosses, 1793-1837, engraver
William Swainson, 1840
Stripple engraving
National Portrait Gallery, London, D6906

Following the sudden death of John Arthur at the age of forty-five in 1849, John Dallachy was appointed Curator in preference to Daniel Bunce. Dallachy (1803-1871) had arrived in Port Phillip in 1848 with a letter of introduction from the Governor of Ceylon, having previously served the Earl of Aberdeen at *Haddo House*, and having worked some years at Kew under Sir William Hooker.[16]

Mueller and Swainson

By 1853 the Victorian government had engaged not one but two scientists in an attempt to arrive at an informed understanding of the flora of the colony. Ferdinand Mueller, who was to become the outstanding figure in nineteenth-century botany in Australia, was appointed Government Botanist by Lieutenant-Governor La Trobe in January 1853, at the age of twenty-seven. William Swainson, Fellow of the Royal Society and Fellow of the Linnean Society, had already been appointed in August 1852 to report on the timber trees of the colony. Pescott found Swainson's appointment difficult to understand:

Batchelder & Co., Melbourne, photographer
Dr Ferdinand Mueller, c.1865
Carte de visite
Collection: Royal Historical Society of Victoria, GNGN0114004

> …the government employ[ed] 'naturalist' William Swainson as a field botanist. A farmer in New Zealand, Swainson came to the Illawarra district of New South Wales to pursue his interest in botany, a subject in which he had been 'dabbling' for some years. He made a study of the Australian eucalypts and was impressed by their complex nomenclature.[17]

If that was all that was known about Swainson his appointment would have been extraordinary. But as will be seen, there was rather more to Swainson. Pescott says nothing about Swainson's experience as a naturalist in England before emigrating to New Zealand.

From Illawarra in New South Wales Swainson wrote to Victoria's Colonial Secretary William Lonsdale on 30 July 1852, offering his services for an investigation of the Australian timber trees.[18] La Trobe was keen to have the flora of Victoria recorded, and promptly took the matter to the Executive Council on 23 August 1852 with the recommendation 'that the proposition might be highly useful to science, and to the development of the resources of the Colony, and that the necessary expense might well be [borne] from the abundant Territorial revenue'.[19] The recommendation was accepted. By letter dated 26 August 1852 the Colonial Secretary replied to Swainson stating that if Sydney did not accept him, Lieutenant-Governor La Trobe would employ him for a fee of £350 per annum with travelling expenses. Swainson agreed to begin work in September 1852. La Trobe, in a letter to Ronald Gunn of October 1852, explained why he procured Swainson's engagement:

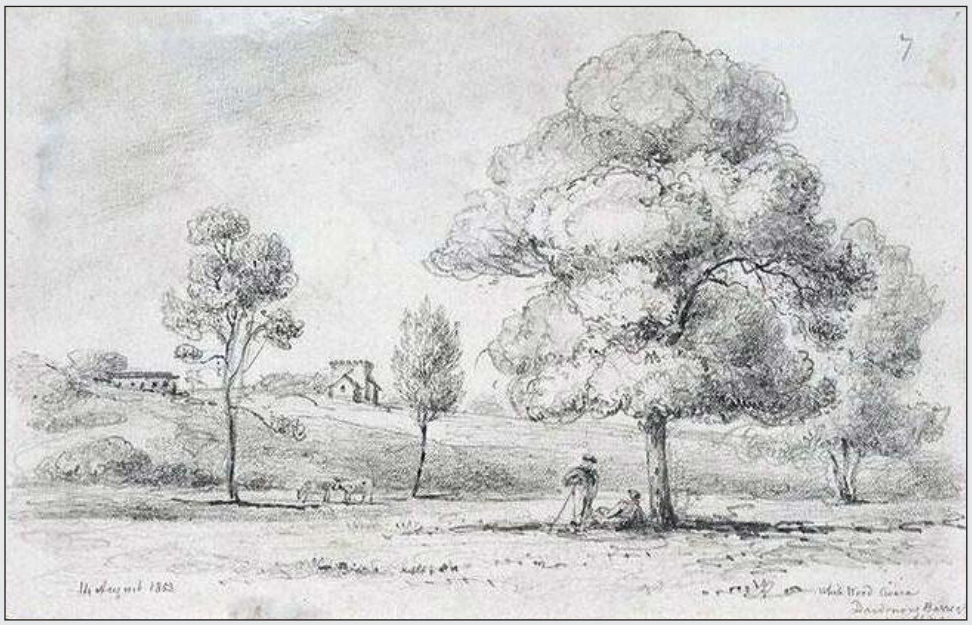
> … I am always glad to get hold of anyone who knows anything about [natural history] & is observant. Such 'ingenious Birds' are very rare here however. Swainson who has been exploring the Illawarra dist[rict] wrote to me some time hence, stating that he had made an offer to the Gov. Genl to examine & describe the timber trees of the Colony, –*gums* more especially, and that if not accepted, he should be glad to be employed in a similar way in Victoria. I lost no time in trying to secure him, as I am sure he will add to our knowledge of what we are & what we have in many ways & N.S.W. having rejected his offer, he comes here.[20]

Mueller's engagement as Government Botanist

In August 1852 Ferdinand Mueller arrived in Victoria, bringing a letter of introduction from Francis Dutton MLC, which described him as 'a very deserving young man… a botanist of very considerable attainments'.[21] John Dallachy introduced Mueller to La Trobe and recommended him as a suitable person to be appointed plant collector and botanist.[22] In the letter to Ronald Gunn cited above, La Trobe wrote: 'There is an honest looking German here, Dr Müller, who as far as I can judge seems to be more of a botanist than any man I have hitherto met with in the Colony; and I shall give him every encouragt.'[23]

There has been a belief that Sir William Hooker recommended Mueller for the position of Government Botanist. Helen Cohn's careful examination of the evidence nevertheless concluded that Hooker had no role in that appointment.[24] It is always difficult to prove a negative, but Mueller's letter to Hooker of 3 February 1853[25] demonstrates that he was unaware of any recommendation. The letter also suggests Mueller's hope that Hooker, as Vice-President of the Linnean Society, knew something of his work from the papers sent to its librarian Mr Kippist for publication.

Despite the absence of direct evidence, it does not follow, however, that Hooker had no role in the appointment. John Dallachy was a Kew man, as Alan Gross noted: 'Through the influence of Sir William Hooker, Dallachy spent some years on the staff of Kew Gardens; he



William Swainson, 1789-1855, artist
White wood acacia, Dandenong Barracks, 1853
Pencil on paper
Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand, A-023-005

returned later to *Haddo House* as head gardener.'[26] James Maiden's high regard for Dallachy – 'perhaps the best [botanical collector] ever employed by the Botanic Gardens' – indicated that he was well aware of the importance of letters of introduction, as was typical of the age. Could Dallachy have been acting with Hooker's approval, or even on Hooker's behalf, in introducing Mueller? The time between August and October 1852 would not have allowed communication to and from Kew, but Dallachy may well have known of Mueller through his contributions to the Botanic Gardens.

When Mueller arrived in Melbourne in 1852, he would not have been unknown because of the groundwork laid in the years following his arrival in Australia in December 1847. Pescott suggests that it was a foregone conclusion that Mueller would be appointed to the newly-created position of government botanist, but that opinion is not supported in Margaret Willis's biography of Mueller.[27]

Mueller's first Australian employment was as a chemist with Messrs Buttner & Heuzenroeder in Rundle Street, Adelaide,[28] but he soon embarked on botanical explorations. By September 1848 he was offering for sale sets of 100 pressed botanical specimens, systematically classified and with their respective seeds added, of plants 'mostly indigenous to this colony' collected on expeditions.[29] According to Pescott, by 1849 Mueller was regularly forwarding packets of seeds and plants from the Adelaide district to Melbourne's Botanic Gardens established three years earlier.[30] From September to November 1851, Mueller went on a botanical excursion to the Flinders Ranges, gathering some 270 species of which 'approximately 90, all deemed to be new to science, were described from specimens gathered on this excursion'.[31]

Henry Ginn's *Report on the Botanical Gardens, Melbourne* dated 26 July 1852 records that 'A valuable addition of Seeds, consisting of seventy-five packages, has been received from Dr Frederick Müller of Adelaide.'[32] It is likely that Ginn told La Trobe of Mueller's contributions. Sara Maroske and Helen Cohn's article, '"Such Ingenious Birds": Ferdinand Mueller and William Swainson in Victoria', suggests that both appointments are difficult to understand, pointing out that Mueller was 'a young, unknown botanist, and a German in an English colony,' while Swainson was 'not a botanist and had published no botanical papers.'[33] I would argue that neither appointment was unreasonable, although the results were perhaps unexpected.

A focus on the work of both men in defining new species demonstrates their very different ways. The comparison is illuminating. Swainson is seen, not only in hindsight, as a failure; whereas Mueller was to go on to an outstanding career. At the time, however, both were recognised men of science, and considered

William Swainson, 1789-1855, artist
Tirhatuan Forest, Port Phillip, 1853
Pencil on paper
Private collection

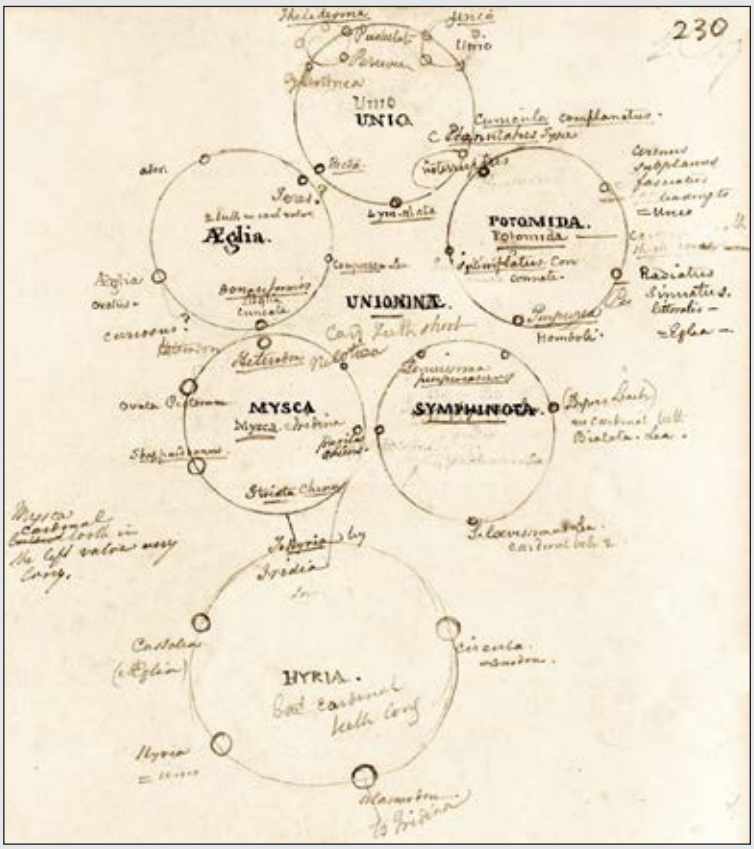
themselves as such. Swainson, notwithstanding his Fellowships of the Royal Society and the Linnean Society, represents the twilight of the age of the amateur self-taught naturalist; Mueller embodied the new science of botany as an international discipline.

Maroske and Cohn had difficulty in understanding why La Trobe was so prepared to engage Swainson.[34] Although they referred to La Trobe's well-founded view of the dearth of scientific talent in Victoria,[35] they did not allude to Swainson's fellowships, nor his standing in natural history in Van Diemen's Land. In the late 1830s, when Sir John and Lady Franklin were seeking to advance the cause of natural history in that colony, Swainson was seen to be a person of influence in obtaining the appointment of a colonial naturalist. Lady Franklin journeyed overland via Melbourne to Sydney in 1839, and during this expedition she wrote to her husband, 'I hope you will not relax in your endeavour to procure Dr Hobson for the Colonial Naturalist's place. Cannot you write to Herschell [*sic*], Swainson, Murchison, Buckland'.[36] All these men had, together with her husband, become Fellows of the Royal Society in the 1820s.

Mueller's letter to Sir William Hooker of 3 February 1853, written soon after Swainson's arrival in Melbourne, confirms his standing, even if an allowance is made for social pleasantries: 'Your venerable friend, Mr W. Swainson, devotes himself since a year attentively and entirely to the examination of the intricate genus Eucalyptus, and in his advanced age, I think, the youthful ardour can not be enough acknowledged, with which he perseveres in this difficult undertaking.'[37]

Swainson had been delayed by illness from taking up his Victorian appointment, and was still at Woollongong when he wrote to his daughter on 2 October 1852 telling her that 'Sir Charles Latrobe [*sic*] has given me an invitation to Melbourne, that he may "avail himself of my experience"… Sir Charles will of course lodge me in Government House, or in some other free quarters'.[38] That expectation was, of course, disappointed, as Swainson later confirmed: 'I first called on Sir Charles Latrobe, who received me very cordially at the Government Offices; but he himself resides at a small cottage on the outskirts of the town.'[39]

Accommodation was found in a small slab cottage at the barracks of the Dandenong Police Station. To begin with Swainson had no complaint, writing to his daughter in February 1853, 'Here then I am located, in a most beautiful situation, although in a very rough bush sort of way regards comfort, and having a most excellent person as a servant and gardener, to collect plants. I have commenced my investigation of the Timber trees of this colony.' But his satisfaction lessened. In a report dated 7 March 1853 he wrote:



William Swainson, 1789-1855, artist
Quinarian diagram showing relationships of Unionina (molluscs). c.1820
Pencil on paper
Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand, E-266-q-230

It would have given me great pleasure, in conclusion, to have made as favourable report of my labours, since arriving in Melbourne as before. But, in justice to myself, I must glance at the causes why they have been otherwise. Located in a most advantageous situation, but in a dilapidated and almost uninhabitable cottage, I have neither the means afforded me of arranging and consulting my former acquisitions, or of preserving new ones. Poorness of living (soldiers rations only) joined to the debility occasioned by my severe illness at Goulburn, prevents me from much walking and I have no horse.

Both paper and a Press are necessary to preserve the specimens I examine and draw, but none has been supplied to me, and in this remote isolated situation, there is no possibility of procuring anything nearer than Melbourne, twenty miles distant, with no public or private conveyance of any sort. Nevertheless, with all these obstacles to contend against, I have made myself acquainted with 55 species of Eucalyptus within a few miles of the cottage, a greater number, in fact, than Dr Mueller (as he told me) had succeeded in discovering in all the parts of South Australia, and Victoria, that he had yet visited.[40]

By April 1853 Swainson had taken up residence with John Wood Beilby at *Tirhatuan*, a cattle station some three miles from Dandenong.[41] He expressed himself to be 'thoroughly disgusted with the country'.[42] In the following month he wrote to the Colonial Secretary explaining that he was unable to procure a collection of woods for Kew Gardens.[43] In September 1853 he was back at the Dandenong Police Hut as he prepared for departure to Van Diemen's Land.[44]

The exact nature of his position has been a matter of debate. There is a Government Abstract, apparently completed and signed by Swainson in June 1853, in which he was described as 'Botanical Surveyor and Draftsman'.[45] The document seems to have been part of the dispute about salary and allowances in which Swainson was then engaged, and it may be accurate enough in this regard. But by June 1853, if not earlier, relations between Swainson and La Trobe had soured.

Swainson's background

William Swainson had considerable involvement in natural history in England, publishing widely in the 1830s, though mainly on birds, insects and shells. His books include ten volumes of Lardner's *Cabinet Cyclopaedia*, the first being *Discourse on the Study of Natural History,* and three volumes of Sir William Jardine's *The Naturalist's Library*.

Born in 1789, he spent his early manhood with the Commissary-General of the British Mediterranean Army stationed in Sicily. There he met the naturalist Rafinesque. Due to ill health he retired on half–pay in 1815.[46] From 1816 to 1818 he explored Brazil, gathering extensive botanical and zoological collections, including by his own account 1,200 species of plants.[47] He also discovered and sent to William Hooker at Kew the orchid *Cattleya labiata Lindl*.[48] On his return to England he published *Zoological Illustrations* and *Exotic Conchology,* then subsequently *Ornithological Drawings.* These publications were enhanced with his detailed, accurate lithographs. In 1820 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society on the recommendation of the President Sir Joseph Banks.[49] He had earlier become a Fellow of the Linnean Society. He applied for the position of head of natural history at the British Museum, and was considered a strong candidate, but John Children, 'who knew nothing of natural history' according to Swainson, was preferred, to his acute disappointment.[50]

In 1839 Swainson was one of nine committee members of a society called First Colony of New Zealand, in association with the New Zealand Land Company. The society comprised heads of families and others intending to settle permanently in New Zealand on lands purchased from the company.[51] Before Swainson left for New Zealand in 1840, his ornithological collection was purchased by subscription for £320 and presented to the University of Oxford. It included about 10,000 specimens of dried plants from Brazil and Sicily, some thousands of Brazilian insects, about 750 sketches and drawings of birds, and about 400 birds stuffed and mounted in glass cases.[52] It is interesting to compare the purchase price with the 1,000 guineas (£1,050) paid in 1783/84 by J.E. Smith (1759-1828), founder and first President of the Linnean Society, for Linnaeus' collection of 14,000 plants, 3,198 insects, 1,564 shells, about 300 letters and nearly 3,000 books.[53]

For a time Swainson appeared to be a leading figure in zoology, but his reputation in England as 'species-monger' was well established before emigrating to the antipodes. Barber considers that 'His new species were usually someone else's old species renamed and redescribed to fit in with his own private classification system, which he called "the circular system of affinities"'. She quotes Audubon's remark that 'Swainson never goes to bed without describing some new species.'[54] Furthermore, his quinary system became the butt of naturalists' jokes, until he 'finally gave up the unequal struggle and emigrated to New Zealand. He was never heard of in European zoological circles again.'[55]

How much of Swainson's background was known in the antipodes is uncertain. He probably relied on his FRS in seeking a Victorian engagement in June 1852.[56] Barber's description of Swainson's work in zoology as species mongering does seem to apply to his *Botanical Report* and the scientific reaction to it. The irony is that advancement in botanical science in the nineteenth century could follow from describing new species. Mueller's letter to the Royal Society seeking (successfully as it turned out) to be awarded the Society's Royal Medal provides a good example. Among his list of attainments was describing more than 2,000 new species of plants.[57] Swainson's problem was that he found them when they were not there. The fragility of scientific endeavour in the nineteenth century is writ large in the several scientific lives of William Swainson.

From La Trobe's point of view the engagement of Swainson was most unsatisfactory. La Trobe's feelings are expressed in his annotation to a letter from Swainson dated 28 June 1853, which included the observation:

> …from first to last, it has been evident that Mr Swainson's conception of the duty he asks and of the amount and character of aid which he shows afforded to him in almost every particular have been very dissimilar from that which I have entertained and in my view unreasonable that I have long despaired of any very satisfactory result of his visit to the Colony.[58]

Two days later he wrote to Ronald Gunn:

> You will soon have Mr Swainson with you. All I can say is that with all his undeniable talent –I have found him a very hard bargain –as helpless as a child, & a grumbler of the first water [*sic*]–I am prepared to see his statement of his labours in Victoria most plentifully interlarded with complaints of hardship & want of cordial cooperation. But n'importe.[59]

Swainson's report

In October 1853 Swainson submitted his *Botanical Report* in which he recorded or described 1,520 species or varieties of eucalypts, 201 species or varieties of pines, and 213 species of casuarina. He claimed that his discoveries were significant, 'Without taking too much credit to myself, I feel satisfied that these discoveries will be regarded with as much surprise and almost incredulously, among the botanists of Europe, as was that of gold in Australia among the geologists of Britain.' [60] The more so, because 'the young gentleman, who fills the office especially of Colonial Botanist, informs me, by letter, that he has not found one new species of Casuarina in this part of the Province'. After submitting the report he wrote seeking more money, 'a fair and liberal remuneration for what I have done'. He argued that 'It appears to me repugnant to justice and to equity, that a young gentleman, who has just entered the walks of Science, more as a Collector, than as a Demonstrator of Botany should have his services more highly remunerated, than one, who having laboured in Science for half a century, is now about to terminate his career.'[61]

The *Botanical Report* was not received favourably by the scientific community. Sir William Hooker was not impressed. He wrote to the Duke of Newcastle, Secretary of State, on 6 March 1854 praising Mueller and wishing that he 'could say as much in favour of Mr Swainson's Report, of which the Governor himself speaks doubtfully. It is a matter of congratulation, however, that the term of Mr Swainson's engagement with the Colony had expired.'[62] It seems the Victorian Government had some difficulty in extricating itself from the engagement of Swainson.[63]

In less official correspondence Hooker was more forthcoming, writing to the Irish botanist William Harvey that the report was 'all balderdash.'[64] Pescott quotes from a letter from Hooker to James Maiden at the Sydney Botanic Gardens dated 9 April 1854: 'In my life I think I never read such a series of trash and nonsense. On the subject of botany… he is as ignorant as a goose.'[65]

William Harvey (1811-1866), who travelled to Australia from Trinity College, Dublin in 1854 to 1856, did not think much of Swainson's report either. He wrote to his sister on 19 November 1854 that he was shown:

> … an absurd botanical report printed by order of the Colonial Govt. & written by *Swainson*… I have never read such childish '*bosh*' signed by an F.R.S. The poor man must be either crazy or have thought that any gammon could be put on the Colonial Council. The report merely contains a statement of the author's discoveries among the Eucalypti (or gumtrees) & the Casuarinae (or sheoaks) He makes out over 1,500 species of these!! –of which 1,300 are Gumtrees & 200 Sheoaks!!! –all discovered in 5 months!!! –If you strike off the noughts from both numbers they will be much nearer the truth – yet this man is now employed at a high remuneration doing similar work in V.D.Land…[66]

William Swainson, 1789-1855, artist
Hesperia Itea, 1820
Lithograph
An example of Swainson's work as a natural history artist
From his *Zoological Illustrations*, Volume I, plate 39 - Project Gutenberg

In a later letter to J.D. Hooker dated 24 February 1855 Harvey wrote of Swainson in Van Diemen's Land: 'He completely humbugged the Govt. in the first place, pocketing large salary & allowances & doing nothing but fiddlefaddle with Eucalypts & Casuarinae. Of the *latter* he discovered 44 new species in half an hour's walk, close behind Mr Gunn's house. There were only 44 trees, but every one was a different species!'[67]

The whole episode demonstrates the difficulty in finding a scientific botanist, and

La Trobe's good fortune in obtaining the services of Mueller. The reception of Swainson's report is also an example of an early, and very effective, peer review.

Mueller's report

Mueller was appointed Government Botanist at a salary of £400 per annum from 26 January 1853.[68] Not yet twenty-eight, he was described as 'full of youthful vigour.'[69] Soon after his appointment he was off on the first of three botanising expeditions through Victoria, often travelling alone for months at a time in country previously untraversed by Europeans, discovering many species. His report of 27 June 1853 followed five months of exploration covering 1,500 miles in the east and south of the colony.[70] La Trobe expressed his pleasure with Mueller's work in the letter of 30 June 1853 cited earlier, in words which neatly combine condescension and awe:

> My clever little Botanist has returned having done quite as much as I expected & more than any but a German, drunk with the love of his Science, –& careless of ease –& regardless of difficulty in whatever form it might present itself– could have effected in the time and under the circumstances.[71]

Mueller's *First General Report* as Government Botanist dated September 1853 was published on 20 October.[72] While attention was focussed on the new plants to be ordered and described, some consideration was given to the exotic plants which had accompanied the early settlers and were becoming naturalised in Victoria. La Trobe was impressed with the report, directing that 'steps should be taken to publish it at once. It will do Dr Mueller and the colony no discredit.'[73] Sir William Hooker's note of 1854 read: 'We cannot too highly appreciate the services rendered to Botanical Science by Mr La Trobe, late Lieutenant-Governor of Victoria, in his appointment of so able and indefatigable a Botanist as Dr Müller to the office in question; and we can only hope that his example will be followed by other Colonial Governors, and with equal prospect of usefulness.'[74]

The 1850s had been difficult times for La Trobe. The disruptions caused by the gold discoveries were difficult to manage. The press was hostile. Under constant wear and strain, he felt compelled to tender his resignation in December 1852. Although his resignation was accepted, his successor did not arrive until June 1854, by which time he had already left the colony.[75] If the Swainson engagement proved to be something of a debacle, La Trobe must have been very pleased at the outcome from the employment of Mueller.

The collection of dried specimens referred to in Mueller's *First General Report* became the foundation of what Pescott describes as 'the now great National Herbarium of Victoria… not excelled anywhere in the southern hemisphere for its extensive and rich collections of Australian native plants as well as plants from all quarters of the world.'[76] It is exciting to be able to see in the Herbarium specimens collected by Mueller. The foundation of this outstanding institution thus stands as an important part of La Trobe's legacy.

Endnotes

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3 Washington Irving, A *Tour of the Prairies*, London, J. Murray, 1835, p.5.

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6 Richard Thomas Martin Pescott, *The Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne: a history from 1845 to 1970*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1982, pp.4-7.

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8 Pescott, p.15.

9 Reilly Drury, *La Trobe: The Making of a Governor*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2006, chapter 6.

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11 Gipps to La Trobe, 26 December 1845, in A.G.L. Shaw, *Gipps-La Trobe Correspondence, 1839-1846*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1989, p.375.

12 A.G.L. Shaw. *A History of the Port Phillip District: Victoria before Separation*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1996, p.212; Andrew Lemon and Marjorie Morgan, *Poor Souls They Perished: The Cataraqui, Australia's worst shipwreck*, 2nd ed., 1995, pp.137-142; Reilly Drury, p.154.

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20 L.J. Blake (ed.), *Letters of Charles Joseph La Trobe*, Melbourne: Government of Victoria, 1975, p.41, letter of 8 October 1852, Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales, MLA249.

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22 Maiden, p.106.

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27 Margaret Willis, *By Their Fruits: a life of Ferdinand von Mueller, botanist and explorer*, Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1949.

28 Ralph Grandison, 'The 1851 Botanical Excursion of Ferdinand Mueller to the Flinders Ranges, South Australia', in Philip S. Short (ed.), *History of Systematic Botany in Australia: proceedings of a symposium held at the University of Melbourne*, 25-27 May 1988, South Yarra, Vic.: Australian Systematic Botany Society Inc., 1990, p.109. An advertisement for the firm is reproduced in Home, p.103.

29 Home, p.103.

30 Pescott, p.33.

31 Grandison, p.112.

32 *Report on the Botanical Gardens, Melbourne*, Melbourne: Government Printing Office, 1852, p.[3].

33 Maroske and Cohn, *Muelleria*, vol.7, no.3, 1992, p.529.

34 Ibid, p.537.

35 See Paul Fox, 'Discovering Port Phillip', in *La Trobe and His Circle: an exhibition to mark the 150th anniversary of the arrival of Victoria's first Lieutenant-Governor*, Melbourne: Council of the State Library of Victoria, 1989, p.49.

36 Quoted in Colin Finney, *Paradise Revealed: natural history in nineteenth century Australia*, Melbourne: Museum of Victoria, 1993, p.46. Note: Sir John Herschell (1792-1871), astronomer and scientific polymath, taught Darwin at Cambridge and became one of his heroes; Sir Roderick Murchison (1792-1871), Scottish geologist who first described the Silurian system; William Buckland FRS (1784-1856), Reader in Mineralogy and Geology at Oxford, in 1824 the first person to describe a dinosaur, which he called *Megalosaurus*.

37 Home, p.142.

38 Swainson to Margaret Marshall, in Swainson (1992), p.165.

39 Ibid, 5 February 1853, p.166.

40 Swainson (1992), p.170 (Swainson to La Trobe, 7 March 1853, PROV VPRS 1189, Inward registered correspondence, 1851-1863, unit 203, 53/2542).

41 The station was originally taken up by Rev. James Clow, before he moved to the Bellarine Peninsula.

42 Swainson (1992), p.171.

43 Ibid, p.172.

44 Ibid, p.175.

45 A copy is reprinted in Swainson (1992), p.168.

46 Swainson (1992), p.4.

47 Ibid, p.6.

48 Mea Allan, *The Hookers of Kew, 1785-1911*, London: Joseph, 1967, p.74.

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50 Ibid, p.6

51 Ibid. p.58.

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53 Margot Walker. *Sir James Edward Smith, 1759-1828: first president of the Linnean Society of London*, London: Linnean Society of London, 1988, chapter 3.

54 Barber, p.63; She refers (p.64) to Swainson's account of himself in his 'Bibliography of Zoology', published as an adjunct to his *Taxidermy* volume, Lardner's *Cabinet Cyclopaedia*, in 1840.

55 Ibid, 64.

56 Pescott, p.34.

57 Home, p.486 (letter of about December 1887).

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61 Swainson (1992), p.177.

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66 Sophie Ducker (ed.), *The Contented Botanist: letters of W.H. Harvey about Australia and the Pacific*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press at the Miegunyah Press 1988, p.164.

67 Ibid, p.197.

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69 Ibid, p.26 (Introduction).

70 Ibid, pp.147-148 (Mueller to Lonsdale, 27 June 1853, PROV VPRS 3991, Inward registered correspondence, unit 408, A53/6386).

71 Ibid. pp.768-769 (La Trobe to Gunn, Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales, MLA249).

72 Frederick Mueller, *First General Report of the Government Botanist on the Vegetation of the Colony*, Melbourne: Government Printer, 1853.

73 Quoted in Pescott, p.36.

74 Home, p.188.

75 Reilly Drury, pp.228-229. La Trobe departed 6 May 1954, six weeks before the arrival of Sir Charles Hotham on 22 June.

76 Pescott, pp.36-37.

Beyond the Public Gaze:
the marriage of Caroline Bowles and James Simpson in pre-goldrush Melbourne

By Anne Marsden

Anne Marsden, a Leeds University graduate and former science teacher, held a 2012-13 Honorary Creative Fellowship at State Library Victoria, leading to articles in The La Trobe Journal, Victorian Historical Journal and La Trobeana. In 2016, The Making of the Melbourne Mechanics' Institution: the 'Movers and Shakers' of Pre-Goldrush Melbourne, followed in 2018 by its companion volume, And the Women Came Too, were published with the support of the Melbourne Athenaeum Library where Anne is a volunteer Archives researcher.

Shrouded by the passage of time, the relationship of two of Australia's earliest European settlers is largely hidden in the records. James Simpson and Caroline Bowles went to great lengths to keep their relationship from the public gaze, resulting on one occasion in unfounded and scandalous rumours circulating in England.

As we explore their arrival in Australia, and early experiences, we discover two strong personalities who were among the advance guard of early settlement, their stories shedding light on conditions in early Van Diemen's Land and the first years of Port Phillip. James was one of the most influential of early Van Diemonians, arriving from England in the *Elizabeth* in April 1825 in his early thirties, and quickly appointed to government positions. Caroline's story is no less ground-breaking. In her early twenties she arrived in New South Wales with a family group in October 1836, enduring the most primitive of conditions on stations in Yass, New South Wales, and later in Port Phillip, in the early days of official settlement.[1]

James was born about 1790, the son of James Simpson, surgeon. Records reveal a younger brother, Rev. Henry Winckworth Simpson to whom we refer later.[2] Possibly James had no interest in following his father into the medical profession, or to take any other standard pathway open to young men of educated households. From what we know of his work in Australia he may have had experience in the legal profession as he was appointed to positions involving administration of the law and arbitration of disputes.

When James arrived in Van Diemen's Land he was immediately appointed by Lieutenant-Governor George Arthur as Superintendent of Government Stock at Ross Bridge, and two years later as one of the five district police magistrates, described by James Boyce as being particularly close to Arthur.[3]

In a despatch dated 20 August 1827 to Earl Bathurst, Secretary of State for the Colonies, Arthur outlined the police magistrates' allowances and duties. In addition to £300 per annum, they were allowed: '£50 per annum for Lodging money in those districts where there is no Government residence, and Forage for one Horse, that they may be able to visit frequently every part of their respective Districts'. Arthur described the appointees as: 'Gentlemen of respectability, thoroughly acquainted with the Colony, and every one of them perfectly competent'. In addition to their ordinary duties as Justices of the Peace, they were responsible for 'prevention of crime: such as attending to the regular musters of the prisoners; the granting and inspecting of passes; the movements of idle and disorderly persons; the conduct of ticket of leave men, and of suspicious characters, especially those having flocks or herds… '[4]

In 1832 James was one of two commissioners appointed to a Land Board to enable applicants to obtain new grants when their original grants were defective. The Board 'was clearly to be an administrative beast rather than a quasi-legal tribunal. The Commissioners were directed to hear contested claims in a relatively informal manner'.[5]

William John Huggins, 1781-1845, artist
Edward Duncan, 1804-1882, engraver
Hobart Town on the River Derwent, Van Diemen's Land, 1830
Aquatint, hand-coloured
Pictures Collection, State Library Victoria, H31992

In 1835 James became the first chairman of the new Commission for Investigating Titles to Land, known as The Caveat Board, the most powerful legal institution of Van Diemen's Land. James expressed disappointment about his government salary in 1834, and in spite of further offers, culminating in a salary offer of £500 in 1836, he resigned his position so that 'he could turn his attention to the advantages of an active employment of his time in other pursuits…'[6] When Arthur reported Simpson's resignation to the Secretary of State, he stated that the cause of the resignation was not so much the salary but that 'in fact, he has been infected with the Port Phillip mania'.[7]

By this time unoccupied land for pastoral activities was becoming scarce in Van Diemen's Land and James had become heavily involved in the Port Phillip Association. This group of private adventurers was formed in Hobart in 1835 by those in league with John Batman to unofficially acquire land from Aboriginal groups in Port Phillip in order to settle permanently.[8] And so James made his move, travelling to Port Phillip in the *Caledonia* in April 1836. As a member of the Association he had been allotted an area of land near the Werribee River, where he 'occupied Station Peak, later the manor of Thomas Chirnside'.[9]

Governor Bourke, on a tour of inspection of Port Phillip in 1837, visited James' station, noting in his diary: 'Situation bleak in winter and cold for sheep'.[10] We glimpse a little of the living conditions on the station from a report in the Melbourne Court Register of 19 March 1838 regarding a theft of items from James' hut. He stated in court:

> The property now produced is mine, they were in my hut where I usually reside at the River Werribee… [there] had been taken away: one spyglass, pair of drab trousers, blue dress coat, blue Surtout coat, green round jacket, blue silk jacket, three [pairs of] shoes, fishing line and reel, burning glass and salt glass, white cotton screen, one white sheet, one Cashmere waistcoat, one pair of white trousers, four cotton pocket handkerchiefs, one blanket, two books (Shakespeare and Murray's 'Asia'), double-barrelled gun, two silk pocket handkerchiefs, one razor, one silver pencil case, shot flask, 'Beauties of Shakespeare', pocket compass case containing six razors, one pair of silk socks.[11]

James was soon involved in the early riverbank settlement which would be named Melbourne by Governor Bourke in 1837. Just a few weeks after his arrival, at the first public meeting of the township on 1 June 1836, it was agreed to submit all disputes between individuals to the arbitration of James: 'except in questions relating to land, with power to impose and collect fines'.[12]

A Resolution was also carried at this meeting for a petition to Governor Bourke requesting appointment of a resident magistrate at Port Phillip, and in September 1836 Captain

George Alexander Gilbert, 1815-1877, artist
View of Station Peak – (Native You-Yangs) taken from the Point Henry Road Geelong, Port Phillip, 1856
Pencil with added watercolour and chinese white on coloured lithographic paper
Pictures Collection, State Library Victoria, H1573

William Lonsdale arrived as the first official administrator of the District.

James appears to have been accepted in the role of 'wise elder', a deeply trusted man. Edmund Finn, writing as 'Garryowen', considered that:

> no better choice of an autocrat could possibly be made than Mr Simpson… and, with a large experience of our earlier and later magistracy – stipendiary and honorary – I never knew a more independent and impartial man on the [Magistrate's] bench. For many years Mr Simpson was police magistrate of Melbourne and a magistrate of the colony… and he always comported himself in a manner which secured the confidence of everyone who witnessed his thorough uprightness.
>
> There was something stern and slightly forbidding in his sallowed [*sic*] face; but it was only skin deep; and, if one could not admire him outwardly, the honesty of purpose which seemed to actuate him, never failed to ensure for him one's respect.[13]

Finn's contemporary, William Westgarth, paints a less severe picture of James:

> It would have been difficult indeed to find anyone, who, in grace and command of natural presence, exceeded this inaugurator of authority in Victoria. His figure, rather tall, shapely, well-developed, surmounted by a noble head, bald with age, just touching the venerable, and with a genial expression of face, which, however, never descended to levity, although times without number to a smile or slight laugh, he sat erect upon the bench… as though institutions were to bend to him, and not he to them…
>
> How so striking, so influence-wielding a man did not get or take a still more leading position than he had was due, perhaps, to some indolence of nature, to a rare and enviable contentment, or to a mixture of both. He took what fell in his way… always in the front social position, and, of course, in universal respect.[14]

While we may draw on both accounts, perhaps we should put more store on Finn's rather less flattering judgement. Finn lived in Melbourne from his arrival in July 1841 until his death in 1898, having consistent contact with James. Westgarth, who arrived in Melbourne in December 1840, moved for the rest of his life, between England and Australia, on one occasion 'to run home for a wife'.[15] Both published their reminiscences in 1888, late in their lives.

Captain William Lonsdale was another who was glad to have James as a colleague. He wrote to a Sydney friend: 'I have at last, I am glad to find, a colleague in the Magistracy, Mr Simpson, who is I believe a worthy man whose assistance and coagency will be a great help to me for I have hitherto had to battle with the rogues alone, which is not always pleasant or desirable, a second opinion being more satisfactory'.[16]

These two needed to work closely together in matters of governance of the organisations that were rapidly springing up in the settlement. When Lonsdale was made Sub-Treasurer, James in June 1840 succeeded him as Police Magistrate,

Unknown photographer
Henrietta Mary Yaldwyn (1805-1855)
From: J.O. Randell, *Yaldwyn of the Golden Spurs*, between pages 66-67

holding office for a year. In 1841 James resigned this post. Michael Cannon wrote: 'In the 1840s government officers were expected to be on call twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, without extra pay or time off', and Lonsdale and Simpson were rebuked by Governor Gipps when they applied for overtime payments in 1841, hence James resigned.[17]

James was appointed to directorships of commercial organisations, and these were often lucrative. The Port Phillip Steam Navigation Company, of which he was Managing Director, obtained a contract in 1842 for carrying mail from Melbourne to Geelong earning £100 per annum. Martin Sullivan commented: 'James Simpson… was another public servant who combined his official duties with those of moneymaking'.[18] James associated with prominent men of the day. *Kerr's Port Phillip Directory* of 1841 listed: 'Melbourne Club, established 1839. President, James Simpson, Esq.; Secretary, Redmond Barry, Esq.; Club House, Collins Street.' This was indeed the pinnacle of Melbourne's social hierarchy.

Lonsdale had a deep interest in education, not only for children, but for adults also. He strongly supported the early establishment of mechanics' institutes and became the founding President in 1839 of the Melbourne Mechanics' Institution, a role in which James followed, serving as the Institution's President for ten years from 1841 to 1850. This body, the first 'library' in the settlement, pre-dated the 1853 establishment of the Melbourne Public Library (now State Library Victoria).

***

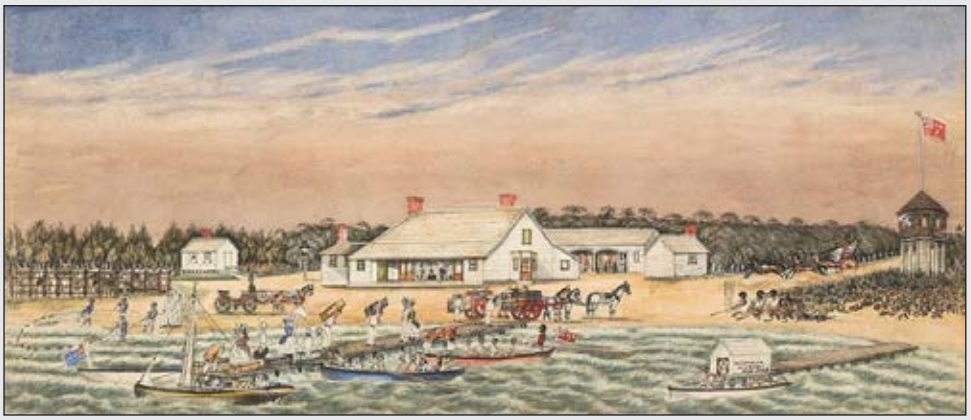
Now we have James firmly ensconced in Melbourne we turn to Caroline's story. Caroline Sarah Bowles, the youngest of two brothers and five sisters, was born in either 1814 or 1815 to 'gentry', Henry and Henrietta Bowles, of Cuckfield, a village in West Sussex and was a small child when her father died in 1819. The family's status is displayed by the family memorials in the Holy Trinity Churchyard in Cuckfield.[19]

We are fortunate to be privy to Caroline's recollections of her time in New South Wales, and its southern outpost, Port Phillip. Caroline kept a diary of her voyage to Australia and subsequent experiences but this has been lost.[20] However, later in life she had used this diary to recount her Australian ventures to her great-niece, Emily Blair-Oliphant who wrote them down. Emily's manuscript is thought to have been held by the Blair-Oliphant family and was extant in 1980 when used by J.O. Randell to record the story of the family's Australian experiences.[21]

From Randell's account we build a picture of Caroline: a lively young woman, who was in her early twenties when she left England to accompany her sister, Henrietta Mary, brother-in-law, William Yaldwyn, and their two young children, to Australia. News had been filtering back to England of lucrative opportunities for pastoralists in New South Wales and William hoped to restore the fragile family fortunes by acquiring and managing a pastoral lease.

The family group left on the *William Glen Anderson* early in May 1836, taking a wearisome five-and-a-half months to reach Sydney. At one stage their water ran low and the ship made for Salvador to replenish supplies. A suspicious vessel travelled near to them for three days, and the crew was ordered on deck with the small arsenal available: one gun, a few muskets and marlin spikes. Caroline displayed a fearless nature when ordered off the poop, 'but refused to come down… as she had been sitting there all the three days the ship had been keeping so near them'.[22]

At last the ship reached Australia and after spending three months in Sydney the family travelled to a pastoral station William had acquired near Yass. The uncomfortable 200-mile (320-kilometre) journey, at the height of summer, was made in a wagon shipped out by William: 'a large tilted car (covered wagonette), fitted up with lockers all round, with two horses. A dray, also two horses for two servant girls and Dick [possibly the gamekeeper] and the luggage. The women slept in the carts, the men on the ground underneath, when no inn or hut was available'.[23]



Wilbraham Frederick Evelyn Liardet, 1799-1878, artist
Liardet's beach and hotel in their heyday [1875]
Watercolour with pen and ink, gouache and pencil: view of c.1840
Pictures Collection, State Library Victoria, H28250/33
On the left may be seen four men hauling in a seine-net with the day's catch. Drays are stacked with trunks as a coachman waits to convey his passengers to town along the bush track that Liardet created for his mail service to Melbourne.

After the family's two servant girls left a fortnight after arrival at the station, Caroline would have found herself a family mainstay, especially as Henrietta before long became pregnant again. They all struggled with the discomfort of a cramped and primitive station homestead, and their close proximity to the local Aboriginal community caused dissension in the nearby settlement: 'we found the black fellows rather troublesome because the man that lived there before used to let them come into the kitchen and lie about the place as long as they liked. This could not be allowed, which made them very indignant and they went about the township saying 'we no like new chums – too much turney turney out'.[24]

William's main objective however had been to take up a pastoral run in Port Phillip. He acquired 60,000 acres (25,000 hectares) near the Campaspe River and in June 1838, almost two years after their arrival in Australia, and after the birth of the Yaldwyn's third child, the family was again on the move.

Returning to Sydney, they boarded the schooner *Edward* bound for Melbourne. The voyage took fifty days and was beset by storms. Provisions had run short by the time they entered Port Phillip and the party was landed without food on the beach at Sandridge, the present-day Port Melbourne.

After camping, hungry and cold, overnight, they made their way to Melbourne through the scrub. A few weeks later the family set off by cart for their *Barfold* station seventy miles (110 kilometres) from Melbourne. Arriving at the station they found that their hut, which had been built by William's overseer, 'was of slabs of wood and had a shingle roof. There were no floors, quite open chimney-places and about five rooms… Bars had to be put to keep out the horse, lamb, emu and magpie, who always came at meals. One day when [Henrietta] was putting a piece of bread in her mouth, the emu suddenly put his head over and snatched it out of her mouth...'[25]

Henrietta struggled with the conditions of country life and was constantly fearful for William's safety on his rounds of the station on horseback. Soon she insisted that they leave the overseer in charge of the station and return to Melbourne. Robert Russell, in private practice as an architect, was commissioned to build a house, and late in 1839 the family moved to a 'commodious brick cottage in Eastern Russell Street'.[26] The family soon settled in, with some of William's assigned convicts looking after the horses and milking the cows.

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Family members were soon in the swing of the social calendar which was gathering momentum in the young Melbourne settlement. At this point we pick up the first contact between the Yaldwyn family and James Simpson. William was appointed to the first Roll of Magistrates, along with James Simpson, William Lonsdale, and other prominent men. The *Port Phillip Patriot and Melbourne Advertiser* in November 1840 noted a 'piscatorial excursion' at the beach:

> A party, consisting of Captain and
> Mrs Lonsdale, Mr and Mrs Yaldwyn,
> Miss Bowles and Mr Simpson,

> attended at the Beach on Saturday last, on a piscatorial excursion. Mr Leardet[27] was present, with his fishing gear, and a copious supply of the finny tribe were taken. Mr Leardet succeeded in capturing a gallon of shrimps in a net, the handiwork of Miss Bowles.[28]

Just two years after moving to Melbourne the Yaldwyn family group was planning to return to England, William having acceded to Henrietta's demands to return to the Yaldwyn estate in Sussex. A month prior to their departure, the *Port Phillip Patriot and Melbourne Advertiser* on 22 February 1841 listed 'James Simpson, Esq. and lady' among those present at a concert the previous Thursday evening.

Randell refers to a 'romance' between James and Caroline, but was this the nature of their relationship? They were both of mature age, well experienced in pioneer life, and so far had avoided any 'entanglement' leading to marriage. Caroline, a young woman now approaching 'on the shelf' territory, had resisted the pull of a respectable marriage, which surely would not have been for lack of suitors. She perhaps was not prepared to give up her independence lightly, to consign herself to the life of a dutiful wife, and in all likelihood, mother to a brood of children.

The relationship may have been based not only on mutual respect, but on a pragmatic evaluation of how they saw their personal futures unfolding. By this time James may have been unwell; the 'sallowed' complexion described by Garryowen may have heralded the liver disease which ultimately caused his death. Caroline may have seen herself as a 'caretaker-companion', welcoming an opportunity for more intellectual conversation than the superficial domestic 'chatter' within her family circle.

Caroline's future on her return to England may have seemed bleak after the relative informality of life in Australia. As an unmarried woman her prospects would have been restricted, perhaps involving life as a 'spinster' in the household of a married sibling, or as companion to a family member or friend. She had, however, tasted a rare freedom from the social restraints of her upbringing, enjoying experiences and challenges that would never come her way again in a return to life in England.

And what might have encouraged James to change course so dramatically in his fifties after a lifetime of self-sufficiency? Perhaps Caroline's outgoing, supportive company was sufficiently appealing to overcome his habitual solitude, especially if indeed he was not well.

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But we jump ahead; first we must speed the Yaldwyn family on their way to England and await developments. Passages were arranged on the barque *Eagle,* which departed for England in early March 1841, five and a half years after their arrival in Australia. The Yaldwyn livestock had been auctioned in February, including Caroline's bay gelding, 'decidedly the best Ladies horse in the Colony'.[29]

The voyage home was uneventful, the family accompanied by William's menagerie of Australian wildlife, not all of which survived the journey. The guests at their London inn were awakened at three o'clock in the morning by the unfamiliar sound of the kookaburras' chorus, resulting in some panic and fear of fire.[30]

Randell suggests that after their return to England the relationship between Henrietta and Caroline had cooled, possibly due to their different temperaments, and a resistance by the more independent Caroline to accept interference in her life by her older siblings.[31]

William's financial woes had worsened as a result of his Australian ventures and two years after the family returned to the estate he was forced to place it on the market. In 1843 the family moved to Blackheath, near London. Without the responsibilities of the family estate William was in need of a project, and he applied to the Secretary of State to take part in a government scheme which involved him shepherding a group of ex-Pentonville prisoners out to Australia.[32] He intended to sail on the *Royal George* leaving Portsmouth in July 1844.

By this time, three years after she had left Melbourne, Caroline and James had made plans to marry, and Caroline asked William if he would book a passage for her to return with him to Melbourne on the *Royal George.* With a small income, possibly from a family estate, Caroline had been living with an aunt at Brighton. Before they left to return to Australia, William took Caroline to meet James' brother, the Rev. Henry Winckworth Simpson, who was vicar of Bexhill, Sussex.

Although her sister Henrietta was aware of Caroline's marriage plans other family members were kept in the dark, Caroline writing to let them know of her plans just prior to sailing, presumably too late for them to interfere. People had been told that Caroline intended travelling in Germany that summer. The secrecy surrounding the whole affair inevitably led to trouble. William's brother-in-law, Robert Logan, had heard about William's Pentonville

men and visited Portsmouth to look at the ship. He was surprised to hear rumours of William and Caroline together at Portsmouth as he had thought Caroline was already in Germany. The *Royal George* left Portsmouth on 29 July 1844. When William returned to England the following year and heard of rumours circulating about a liaison with Caroline, he obtained a statement from the captain of the *Royal George* stating, 'the conduct of Mr Yaldwyn toward every passenger on board, particularly toward the ladies, was strictly of a moral and correct nature…'[33]

Caroline stayed in Melbourne with her friends William and Martha Lonsdale, and on Saturday, 1 February 1845, she and James were married by licence at St James' Church, Melbourne. William was a witness to the marriage and it is possible that he delayed his return to England until after the wedding. Randell maintained that there was no announcement of the marriage in Port Phillip newspapers, but the *Port Phillip Patriot and Melbourne Advertiser* of Monday 3 February carried an announcement: 'At St James Church, by the Rev. A.C. Thomson, James Simpson, Esq., to Caroline Sarah, youngest daughter of the late Henry Bowles, Esq., of Mill Hall, Cuckfield Sussex.'[34] James' contacts in Van Diemen's Land would have seen a similar announcement in the *Launceston Examiner* of 12 February. It seems surprising that neither Garryowen, nor McCallum, mentioned the marriage in their writings on early Port Phillip.

Caroline and James lived in 'little Flinders Street' and later in a house in Wellington Parade, East Melbourne.[35] The couple led a quiet life, McCallum noting that, 'With increasing years, Simpson largely withdrew from public life'. Twelve years after the marriage, on 17 April 1857, James, aged sixty-five, died of liver disease. The Melbourne *Herald* of 21 April 1857 reported on the funeral, conducted by Mr Sleight, 'with his customary good taste'; a plain hearse drawn by horses, followed by three mourning coaches: 'then a procession extending upwards of three-quarters of a mile'.[36] There were no children of the marriage and Caroline found herself, in her early forties, a widow.

And how did Caroline fare after James' death? Five years later, in September 1861, she remarried in Melbourne a widower of similar age, Thomas Henry Braim, whose wife had died the previous year. Braim, a scholar of St John's College, Cambridge, had spent his life teaching. He arrived in Hobart in 1835 to open the Hobart Town Grammar School, and subsequently opened private schools in Hobart and Melbourne, which were not successful. In 1842 he moved to Sydney with his first wife and three children to become headmaster of Sydney College. After briefly returning to Cambridge to complete his divinity studies, Braim came back to Australia, and opened a school at Port Fairy which developed into a church boarding school. He went on to establish other schools, also publishing works on a variety of subjects. Biographer Edgar French considered Braim 'of a practical rather scholarly disposition, yet well read…' In 1865, after Braim's health broke down, he and Caroline returned to England, where he served as a rector and vicar of parishes, dying at Risley in 1891.[37]

Unknown photographer
Caroline Sarah Braim, formerly Simpson
(1814/15–1911)
From: J.O. Randell, *Yaldwyn of the Golden Spurs*, facing p.19

Caroline survived Braim, dying in 1911 aged ninety-six.[38] She was laid to rest in the Holy Trinity Church, Cuckfield, having returned full circle to her childhood home. Perhaps Caroline's irrepressible determination to make the most of what fate put in her way contributed to her longevity. One feels rather sad for her sister Henrietta whose marriage most certainly did not take the path she would have expected.

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We have speculated on what drew Caroline and James to marry in their mature years. It is possible that their natures complemented each other: Caroline with her lively, optimistic, and courageous approach to meeting challenges, and James seemingly content with his status and the obvious respect he had earned from the community. Caroline was to gain independence from her family and marriage to a man of

substance; James the support of a capable woman. For both of them, marriage in whatever shape it took, would have afforded them companionship and a buffer against the 'slings and arrows' of early colonial life.

Endnotes

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15 Geoffrey Serle, 'Westgarth, William (1815-1889)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography,* Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, Vol.6, 1976, p.380.

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17 Michael Cannon, *Old Melbourne Town before the Gold Rush*, Main Ridge, Vic., Loch Haven, Books, 1991, pp.34, 133.

18 Martin Sullivan, *Men and Women of Port Phillip,* Sydney: Hale and Iremonger, 1985, p.83.

19 Grave Register Holy Trinity Church Cuckfield Sussex, https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/2304931 (accessed 5 December 2019).

20 It has not been possible to locate the family who hold documents and photographs of members of the Yaldwyn and Bowles families. Their family estate now seems to be a tourist facility.

21 Randell, pp.139-140.

22 Ibid, pp.24-25.

23 Ibid, p.28.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid, pp.48-49.

26 Garryowen, p.636.

27 Wilbraham Frederick Evelyn Liardet of the Pier Hotel, Sandridge, later Port Melbourne. In the summer of 1840 Liardet's Pier Hotel became the fashionable resort of Melbourne society, its enterprising proprietor providing a regular carriage service along Bay Road to bring holiday-makers to the beach. Fishing parties were supplied with nets and lines, and boats were also available for those who wanted a quiet row on the bay. Until 1848 Liardet's jetty was the only one along the bay at Melbourne. (*Liardet's Water-Colours of Early Melbourne*, introduction and captions by Susan Adams, edited by Weston Bate, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press on behalf of the Library Council of Victoria, 1972, pp.3, 80.)

28 *Port Phillip Patriot and Melbourne Advertiser,* 19 November 1840, p.2.

29 Randell, p.60.

30 Ibid, p.64.

31 Ibid, pp.72-73.

32 The scheme was to transport 'exiles', generally young convicts, who had been given a conditional pardon (ticket of leave) after serving part of their sentence in Pentonville or other reformatory prison. The *Royal George* was the first of ten ships to transport 'Pentonvillians' to Port Phillip over a four-year period. (Lorraine Finlay, 'The Randolph: "a harbinger of evil"', *La Trobeana*, vol.18, no.2, July 2918, p.5.)

33 Randell, pp.73-79.

34 *Port Phillip Patriot and Melbourne Advertiser*, 3 February 1845, p.2.

35 Alfred Stephen Kenyon, List of early pioneers and settlers in Victoria, 1932. Index cards (and microfilm), State Library Victoria.

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Dr Frances Thiele

Megan Anderson

La Trobe Society Fellowships at State Library Victoria

The first La Trobe Society Fellow in 2007/08 was **Dr Frances Thiele** whose research topic was 'Edward Stone Parker and the Aboriginal People of the Mount Macedon District'. Frances is a freelance historian working in the area of Aboriginal cultural heritage management. For seven years she was Field Historian at State Library Victoria. Her monograph, *La Trobe and the Bureaucrats: How the best of intentions failed to protect the Aboriginal People of Port Phillip,* was published online in 2017, and may be accessed via the La Trobe Society's website.

Five eminent scholars have since held La Trobe Society Fellowships:

- Dr Wayne Caldow, 'Perceptions of Place: the European experience of Gippsland, 1839-1844'
- Dr Helen MacDonald, 'The Mysterious Life of Henry Condell, Melbourne's First Mayor'
- Caroline Clemente, 'Thomas Woolner: a Pre-Raphaelite artist in Melbourne'
- Dr Madonna Grehan, 'An Émigré Gentlewoman Midwife in Port Phillip and Victoria, 1848-1880'
- Dr Monique Webber, 'La Trobe's Garden City and the Lost Sculptures of Fitzroy Gardens'.

The results of the research of these Fellows has been published in the pages of *La Trobeana*, and in other academic publications, and details and links to their papers may be located on the La Trobe Society website.

The current La Trobe Society Fellow for 2019/20 is **Megan Anderson**, Costume Production Assistant at Sovereign Hill Museums Association in Ballarat. Her research topic is: 'Extravagance, Tradition and Power: an exploration of Lieutenant-Governor Charles La Trobe's uniform'.

Megan has been exploring the significance, history, tradition and symbolism encompassed in La Trobe's uniform. 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. The outcome of Megan's research will include an impeccably tailored suit with accents of gold and silver, and may also result in a collaborative exhibition.

Megan was scheduled as a guest speaker in our program postponed during this year, but she will speak to La Trobe Society members at a forthcoming meeting during 2021.

Forthcoming events

Ensuring the health and safety of La Trobe Society members and the guest speakers at our functions during 2020 has remained our highest priority during the long months of Covid-19 restrictions. This has resulted in the postponement of almost all the events programmed for the year. However, the La Trobe Society Committee decided to hold the Annual General Meeting this year via Zoom on Wednesday 7 October. Author, broadcaster, writer and performer Michael Veitch agreed to be our guest speaker on the topic, 'Hell Ship *Ticonderoga*'.

Dr Liz Rushen's History Month lecture on 'Governor La Trobe and Bishop Perry', scheduled for October in association with the Anglican Historical Society, has been postponed to 2021.

Unfortunately, our Christmas celebration for 2020 has been cancelled due to the restrictions on gathering numbers of people together.

We hope that our program of events will revert to normal in 2021. All being well, our first function next year will be a Special Celebration of the 20th Anniversary of the La Trobe Society, coinciding with the 220th Anniversary of La Trobe's birth.

2020

NOVEMBER

Friday 27

Christmas Cocktails
Cancelled

DECEMBER

Sunday 6

'La Trobe Sunday'
Second Sunday of Advent
Anniversary of the Death of
C J La Trobe
Time: 11.00 am
Online Venue: St Peter's Eastern Hill streamed on YouTube, see link on the Society's website-Events page.
Liturgy Sheets are available at https://www.stpeters.org.au
No bookings required

2021

MARCH

Date tbc

Twentieth Anniversary of the
La Trobe Society
Details to be advised

Back Issues

Back issues of La Trobeana are available on the Society's website, except for the last issue. The back issues may be accessed at www.latrobesociety.org.au/LaTrobeana.html They may be searched by keyword.

Contributions welcome

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

Further information about the Journal may be found on the inside front cover and at www.latrobesociety.org.au/LaTrobeana.html

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BACK COVER
La Trobe Family coat of arms

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


"Qui la cèrca, la trova"