



La Trobeana

The Newsletter of the La Trobe Society of Australia

Grevillea La Trobeana Engraving by Edward La Trobe Bateman - La Trobe Collection, State Library of Victoria

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FORTHCOMING FUNCTIONS

La Trobe's Birthday Picnic

Date: Thursday 20 March 2003
Time: 5.30p.m.-8.30p.m.
Cost: \$5.00 per visitor to the Cottage
Place: La Trobe's Cottage
Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra

Join the Society at the home of Charles and Sophie La Trobe for colonial music and re-enactment entertainment in the grounds to celebrate the Lieutenant-Governor's 202nd birthday!

The cottage will be open for viewing and a special attraction will be the cooking demonstrations over the open fire in the kitchen building. Cook will be baking and stirring up all sorts of birthday treats as the kitchen building hearth is brought to life with culinary activities. Cook and her assistant will tell you all about the many implements and pieces of simple technology used to operate this nineteenth century facility.

Richard Heathcote and his National Trust colleagues will be on hand to ensure Society members and their guests explore and enjoy the first vice-regal residence in Victoria and its history.

BYO picnic. Please telephone 9656 9830 to advise us of your attendance.

La Trobeana is the newsletter of the La Trobe Society Inc. It appears twice yearly, with news of forthcoming events, and reports of interest to the membership.

Committee

President: Prof. A.G.L. Shaw
Vice Presidents: Richard Heathcote
Susan Priestley
Treasurer: John Drury
Secretary: Dianne Reilly
Members: Prof. John Barnes
Dr. Fay Woodhouse

The La Trobe Society Inc.
P.O. Box 65
PORT MELBOURNE Vic. 3207

Royal Historical Society of Victoria/La Trobe Society A.G.L. Shaw La Trobe Lecture

Date: Tuesday 17 June 2003
Time: 5.30p.m.
Cost: Members of both societies free; guests \$5.50
Place: Royal Historical Society of Victoria
239 A'Beckett Street
MELBOURNE Vic. 3000

Speaker: Dr Ray Wright, Usher of the Black Rod in the Legislative Council of the Parliament of Victoria.
Topic: "Learning to Legislate": Victoria's first Legislative Council, 1851-56.

From 1851 to 1856, Victoria was governed by a part-nominated, part-elected Legislative Council. Inexperienced, often inept and sometimes irresponsible, the Council was widely criticised. Yet despite the hurricane of the goldrushes, and almost despite itself, the achievements of Victoria's first legislature now seem astonishing. For the Council invented the secret ballot. It wrote Victoria's Constitution. It began the construction of Parliament House. Local government, the miner's right, a supreme and county court system, tariff reform, rail and telegraph extension, a State Library and University of Melbourne, public works, education, anti-transportation, environmental management, and a more democratic franchise were other initiatives of the Council. Here too is the story of William Stawell and John Foster, of La Trobe, Hotham and Fawkner, of John O'Shanassy and Peter Lalor and many other well known figures who, as amateur legislators, profoundly shaped our society.

Dr Ray Wright is Usher of the Black Rod in the Legislative Council of the Parliament of Victoria. He is the author of various works in Victorian parliamentary, administrative, and environmental history including *The Bureaucrats' Domain: Space and the Public Interest in Victoria, 1836-84*; *A People's Counsel: A history of the Parliament of Victoria, 1856-1990*; *Who Stole the Mace?*; and *A Blended House. The Legislative Council of Victoria, 1851-1856*.

The Role of Lieutenant-Governor of Victoria

On 14 July 1851, the former Superintendent of the Port Phillip District of New South Wales was sworn in as Lieutenant-Governor of the new colony of Victoria. Why this ceremony took a fortnight to be carried out is difficult to say but why La Trobe was only a Lieutenant-Governor is easily explained

When Earl Grey, Secretary of State for the Colonies, wrote to Sir Charles FitzRoy, Governor of New South Wales, on 31 July 1847, agreeing to the creation of the new colony, he noted that

some method will be devised for enabling the various Legislatures of the several Australian Colonies to co-operate with each other in the enactment of such laws as may be necessary for regulating the interests common to those possessions collectively - such as for example are the imposition of duties of import and export, the conveyance of letters and the formation of roads, railways or other internal communication traversing any two or more of such Colonies ...

That part of the plan, which respects the creation of a central authority implies the establishment of the system of Representative Legislation throughout the whole of the Australian Colonies.¹

Exactly a year later he repeated his opinion. Referring to the likelihood of the separate colonies imposing different customs duties in each colony he deplored the fact that this would involve the necessity of establishing

lines of internal Custom houses on the frontier of each. The extreme inconvenience and loss which each community would sustain from such measures, needs no explanation; it will therefore be absolutely necessary to adopt some means of providing for that uniformity in their commercial policy which is necessary ...²

But Grey's wise and farsighted proposals aroused some self-interested opposition and there was little support to counteract it. Apathy was widespread and little consideration of the genuine practical difficulties in the proposals was given in either the colonies or in London. Parliamentary opposition there in the end induced Grey to abandon what was a first proposal for intercolonial federation - at least between New South Wales, Victoria, Van Diemen's Land and South Australia. However when Parliament passed the Australian Colonies Government Act in 1850, without the so-called 'Federation clauses', Grey, though admitting several 'practical objections' to his plan, went on to explain to FitzRoy, on 30 August,

I am none the less persuaded that the want of some such central authority to regulate matters of common importance to the Australian colonies will be felt, and probably at a very early period.³

However, being unwilling to try to force anything on the colonies that they did not want, he admitted he had dropped his proposals, but in order to help the development of any federal movement that might, he said he had decided to appoint the Governor of New South Wales Captain General and Governor-in-Chief of New South Wales, 'Governor-Governor of all Her Majesty's Australian possessions' and Governor of Van Diemen's Land, South Australia and Victoria and to appoint Lieutenant-Governors in the last named colonies. The latter would exercise all the normal powers of Governors, except when the Governor-General visited their colony, but Grey gave no further instructions as to how the Governor-General should act. In practice FitzRoy did nothing to implement inter-colonial co-operation and federation had to wait half a century. La Trobe's successor, Sir Charles Hotham, though appointed Lieutenant-Governor of Victoria on 22 June 1854, became Governor on 22 May 1855, and since then his successors have held that title.

A.G.L. Shaw

¹ Grey to FitzRoy, 31 July 1847, Historical Records of Australia, vol.xxv, p.702.

² *Ib.*, 31 July 1848, vol.xxvi, pp.531-2.

³ *Ib.*, 30 August 1850, quoted, J.M. Ward, *Earl Grey and the Australian Colonies, 1846-1857*, (1958), p.227.

CHRISTIAN IGNATIUS LA TROBE

Members were delighted by the highly accomplished piano recital at 'Glenfern' in Caulfield on 10 October last year by Rohan Murray of the 'Glenfern Team of Pianists.' Rohan performed a number of sonatas by Christian Ignatius La Trobe, the father of the Superintendent and first Lieutenant-Governor, whose works are not widely known.

The following biographical sketch of Christian Ignatius may be of interest.

Christian Ignatius La Trobe, the son of Benjamin and Anna La Trobe, was born in 1758 at the Moravian settlement at Fulneck in Yorkshire where he began an education which was to result in a career as a Moravian bishop. He was enrolled at Fulneck school at the age of just two in 1760 during his father's headmastership. He continued his studies at the Moravian Theological College at Niesky in Germany where the curriculum allowed for the development of the talents of each individual student. It was here that he was given 'excellent musical instruction' and developed an extraordinary facility with a wide range of musical instruments. In 1787, he became Secretary to the Moravian Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel. Three years later at Fulneck, he married Hannall Benigna Syms of Ballinderry, County Tipperary in Ireland, daughter of a Moravian minister. Of this marriage, six children were born, of whom Charles Joseph was the fifth child and third of four sons.

Due to his extraordinary intellectual abilities and vision, Christian Ignatius was elected Secretary of the United Brethren in England in 1795, and so began his career as an evangelical missionary which was to last for forty-one years. It has been said of him that he was 'not only the finest Moravian preacher of the Century, but was recognized as one of the greatest Protestant preachers in England.' Some of his experiences are recorded in his book *Journal of a visit to South Africa in 1815 and 1816*. On his return journey, on board the Royal Navy frigate *Zebra*, he visited the island of St Helena 'to offload some wine, sheep and other goods' for Napoleon, who had just been landed there as a prisoner. La Trobe was conducting the young Plantagenet Somerset, son of the Governor of the Cape Province, home to England. They had hoped to meet the former Emperor, but

he was just now not only highly displeased with the Governor [Sir Hudson Lowe] and the English in general, on account of some necessary restrictions put upon him, but truly ill with a swelling of the gums, and a breaking out in the lower part of his face, which had confined him to his room for several days.

Christian Ignatius La Trobe mixed in musical circles, counting the renowned musicologist Dr Charles Burney and the composer Franz Josef Haydn among his closest friends. He himself was a prolific composer, dedicating his *Three Sonatas for Piano*, published about 1791, to Haydn. His most important publication for the Moravian liturgy was *Anthems for one or more voices sung in the Church of the United Brethren* (London, 1811), and his *Selection of Sacred Music* in six volumes issued between 1806 and 1826, according to Nicholas Temperley, was a 'pioneering work [which] opened an entirely new realm of music, most of it Catholic in origin, to English musicians.' While he was not a professional musician, it is recorded that Christian Ignatius

could play an immense number of Haydn's compositions by heart, and was a noted composer himself. An obituary noted that

It seemed extraordinary, that, with such large hands as he possessed, he could manage the keys of the pianoforte with the requisite clearness and agility. Yet he played delightfully in the style of the most accomplished musician.

Like his father before him, Christian Ignatius was active in the anti-slavery movement, and had close contact with William Wilberforce, the English Member of Parliament who had devoted himself and his considerable financial resources to the cause of the abolition of the slave trade and of slavery itself. Wilberforce was one of the leaders of the Clapham Sect, a group of evangelical social reformers in London. Christian Ignatius subscribed to the same principles as this gathering of well-connected and influential men, and because of their friendship, Wilberforce contributed to the increasing expense of Moravian missionary work at that time in the West Indies.

Christian Ignatius was frequently away from his six children while on evangelical missions. To maintain his parental role, he compiled 'Letters to my children, written at sea during a voyage to the Cape of Good Hope in 1815.' In his lengthy and concerned letter, the only one in existence, to the fourteen-year-old Charles Joseph, whom he addressed by his family name of Joseph, he recalled his great fear of losing him as an infant at two years of age from a debilitating fever, and the tremendous relief when the crisis had passed. He went on to communicate to Joseph the great importance of religious principles in living a good life and, in a series of anecdotes, gave his son 'some proofs of the gracious dealings of God our Saviour.' Christian Ignatius wrote to all his children, recounting various events in his lifetime. When writing to Charles Joseph, he made reference to his son's sense of humour: 'You are of a lively, cheerful disposition, and would perhaps, best like some merry story, by which you might be amused, as well as instructed.' In recounting the incident of Charles Joseph's fever, Christian Ignatius recorded the efforts he went to ensure his son's recovery, his great concern not to worry his wife unnecessarily, and the sharp anxiety he felt at the very real prospect of losing the infant to some unknown illness.

The moral he wished to point out to Charles Joseph was that, having been spared a premature death, he had a moral obligation to the God who had preserved him: 'our dear Joseph should be a joy and honour to him and to his people, as his child and servant.' The next anecdotes in the letter referred to generous donations to the needy, since 'You have a generous heart, and love to hear of a poor man relieved in distress.'

Besides a considerable opus of sacred music, La Trobe also composed vocal works totalling over one hundred independent anthems and solos, around twelve cantatas and oratorios. Eight of these larger works are extant in their entirety. Most of the independent works and many numbers from the larger works exist in various manuscript collections, and there are published versions in music libraries around the world. Unfortunately, most of La Trobe's instrumental music, including a number of clarinet concertos, no longer exists. The only known published instrumental works are the three piano sonatas of Opus III and nine organ preludes.

We have Haydn to thank for the encouragement that brought about the publishing of La Trobe's piano sonatas. La Trobe met Haydn during the master's first London visit, and in a letter of 1828 to the publisher, Vincent Novello, La Trobe recalled a visit by Haydn to his home. '... hearing from a friend, that I had ventured to compose some sonatas for the pianoforte, he desired to hear them. As he observed that they ought to be printed, I agreed, if he would permit me to dedicate them to him.' Haydn, himself, mentioned La Trobe in his first London Notebook, stating that 'He dedicated his sonatas to me.'

That characteristics of Haydn's style exist in La Trobe's works is understandable. Not only could he perform Haydn's piano works, but he also could play from memory many of his string quartets. La Trobe's compositions do reveal a great deal of the master's influence, yet they have merit of their own and are not mere stereotypes of Haydn's works. The music critic, William S. Newman, in his book *The sonata in the Classic Era*, noted that '... symphonic development is one of the most pronounced traits in the unexpectedly good set of *Three Sonatas* ... by Christian Ignatius Latrobe.'

Christian Ignatius La Trobe died in England in 1835, the year in which Charles Joseph married Sophie de Montmollin, but his music lived on.

A CD of the piano sonatas of Christian Ignatius La Trobe is available from the Secretary for \$39.00, including postage.

Dianne Reilly

AUSTIN LA TROBE MOTOR CARS

Following Tim Latrobe's advice in the last issue of La Trobeana of the existence of an Austin Latrobe motor car, Allan Tyrrell, an Austin 7 enthusiast with a great interest in their history, has provided the following information about the vehicles:

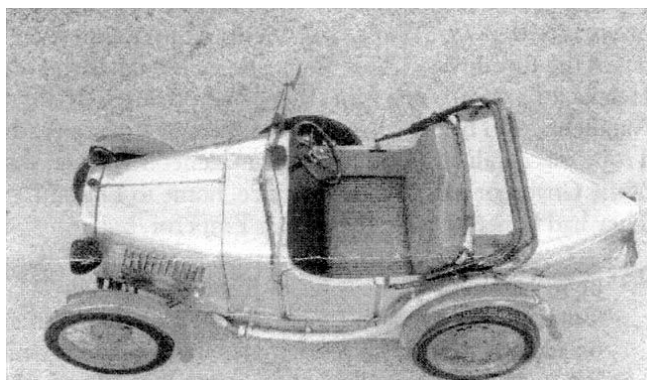
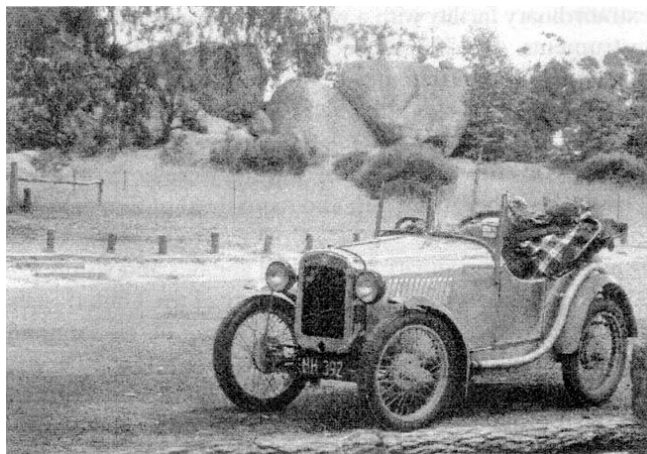
In the 1920s and 1930s a heavy duty, was imposed on complete motorcars imported into Australia, so the local motor companies brought in rolling chassis with the engines and gearboxes etc already fitted, and they had bodies fitted here. Each State had motor body works, generally in the capital city. Holden in Adelaide being one the biggest, While Ford built bodies in Geelong and in Melbourne. There were a number of others including Ruskins in Dudley Street, Flood's in St. Kilda Road near the Prince Henry Hospital, and Latrobe Body Works in Latrobe Street, probably in the light industrial section down towards Spencer Street. The complete cars were then sold at Latrobe Motors, 194 to 196 Latrobe Street, one door down from Swanston Street. Two types of bodies were made, the most popular being the two-sealer sports model with a smart aluminium boat-tail shape. A few of this sports type are still around, the best known being that of Mrs. Ronnie Heagney who has had the car for twenty-eight years. She bought it from an elderly lady who had the car from new, buying it in the early 1930s. It is interesting to note that a member of the Austin 7 Club makes replica bodies of this model, and a few of these are also on the road.

It's easy to see why Mrs. Heagney fell in love with it. It is so simple, with its polished aluminium body, red wire wheels, red cycle mudguards and pram hood, Lift the bonnet and you won't find any big sports-car thumper, just a tiny side-valve motor not much bigger than three or four house bricks, with fuel gravity fed to it from a four-gallon (18-litre) tank on the firewall.

The suspension is equally practical and simple: a transverse semi-elliptic cross spring at the front and quarter elliptic at the rear.

To start the car, you have to lift the bonnet so that you can turn the fuel on. There's no ignition key. You just press the foot-operated button on the floor beside the starter motor, which protrudes back into the cabin.

Mrs. Heagney has kindly provided La Trobeana with a photograph of her 1929 Austin Latrobe. Her car is almost entirely in original condition, lovingly cared for throughout its 74 year life. She paid \$2000 for it in 1974, but she is not sure what its present-day value would be. "That's a controversial question. Restored versions sell for more than \$10,000 to \$15,000, but originality must be worth more than that," she says.



The following letter to the Editor of The Age newspaper is reproduced for the interest of members.

Why La Trobe's vision must prevail at Point Nepean

This Christmas we were visited by family from overseas. We toured Victoria, to lunch on Leonard (Squeaky) Beach at Wilsons Promontory, to visit the jewel of Churchill Island and to then stroll the Melbourne Botanic Gardens on Boxing Day. We were not alone and shared these beautiful places with thousands of other local and international visitors.

Our guests were deeply impressed by our public areas and observed how much these contributed to our standard of living and public amenity. We are indeed fortunate to have these places, but each was hard won.

In 1850, Governor Charles La Trobe reminded the burgesses of Melbourne that the settlement was growing apace and that they had still not made provision for a botanic gardens. The construction of Melbourne was stopped until this was done.

In the same decade, two large areas of Melbourne's most desirable real estate were earmarked to be offered for public auction to developers. La Trobe intervened — and we now have the Carlton and Fitzroy gardens as enduring monuments to his wisdom and vision.

Where, and what, would we be without the Tan, the Fitzroy Gardens and the Prom?

Fifty years later, Baldwin Spencer addressed the public in the Athenaeum Theatre, insisting that Wilsons Promontory should be a national park, rather than a series of commercial subdivisions. And another 80

years on, Sir Rupert Hamer and the Trust for Nature purchased Churchill Island for the Australian public before it could be flogged off to the highest bidder.

It is hard to understand how an English governor from the 1850s was prepared to consider the generations to come, while our myopic Prime Minister in 2003 was set to advertise public land at Point Nepean for auction next month (*The Age*, 1/1).

Where, and what, would we be without the Tan, the Fitzroy Gardens and the Prom? And what will our grandchildren and their visitors see when they visit Point Nepean in 50 years' time? A wondrous public park — as the report commissioned by the Defence Department has recommended — or yet another tawdry, elitist subdivision?

Nell Taylor, Woolamal