



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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A WORD FROM THE TREASURER

Members are advised that subscriptions for the year 2003-04 become due on 1 July.

Subscription rates: Individual	\$25.00
Family	\$40.00
Corporate	\$550.00

A renewal slip is enclosed. Would those members who joined during 2003 or who have already renewed their membership kindly disregard this reminder.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS – 2003

3 June	Domed Reading Room Preview, State Library of Victoria (Invitations sent)
17 June	AGL Shaw La Trobe Lecture RHSV/La Trobe Society 5.30pm, 239 A'Beckett St, Melbourne
19 August	Annual General Meeting Speakers: Robyn Riddett, Geoffrey Down, Dr Fay Woodhouse Jolimont: Three Sides of a Square
2 December	Christmas Cocktails. Date, venue and speaker to be advised.

The La Trobes' Jolimont Garden

by Richard Heathcote

As research continues on the garden created by Sophie and Charles La Trobe at the original Jolimont site, to the north of what is now the Melbourne Cricket Ground, some interesting facts have begun to emerge.

On a recent visit to the La Trobe Library I examined the Edward La Trobe Bateman sketches and found that his ability to depict accurately the plants, shrubs and trees which grew around the dwelling were so well observed that they could be identified botanically. (See Figure 1 and Figure 2). Philip Tulk, Manager of National Trust Gardens, has begun the task of listing the individual plants depicted in the 22 pencil sketches held in the Library. La Trobe Bateman, cousin of the Governor, produced evocative images of this family home whilst at the same time reflecting his Arts and Crafts Movement sensitivities to the flora and fauna he beheld.

I was also fortunate to see Edward La Trobe Bateman's alphabet designs for *The Catalogue of the Melbourne Public Library 1861* (Figure 7). Each alphabetical section was headed by a wood engraving of a native plant carefully illustrated with great ability by Bateman, reinforcing my opinion that his skill lay in not just depicting plants with botanical accuracy, but also in creating beautiful designs. Those interested in garden history can see these plates reproduced in the recently published, *Oxford Companion to Australian Gardens*.

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. Contributions are always welcome.

Committee

President:	Professor A G L Shaw, AO
Vice Presidents:	Richard Heathcote Susan Priestley
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The purpose of examining the drawings extends beyond plant identification to our interest in reconstructing the overall landscape plan for the Jolimont garden. It is intended to produce an axonometric diagram of where the orchard, kitchen garden and flower garden were sited, as well as locating the rockeries, greenhouse and garden beds. With the aid of the new technology, it is hoped that we can create a 'virtual experience' of travelling along the drive and walking through the garden and up to the cottage – on a computer screen.

The La Trobe Bateman drawings provide all the visual information that such a journey would take in. Who knows, this may be the basis of a small exhibition featuring the drawings, the three dimensional plans and the computerised walk-through of a garden that ceased when La Trobe left the colony nearly 150 years ago, in March, 1854.

Richard Heathcote



Figure 1

Edward La Trobe Bateman

The Greenhouse and front entrance of Jolimont

Pencil, chinese white on paper, 13.2 x 17.6 cm M 4345

Source: *La Trobe Picture Collection*,
State Library of Victoria



Figure 2

Edward La Trobe Bateman

View of the larger rockery

Pencil, chinese white on paper, 13.8 x 17.5 cm M4346

Source: *La Trobe Picture Collection*
State Library of Victoria

The Huguenot Background of Charles Joseph

La Trobe

by Robert Nash

Charles Joseph *La Trobe*: the obvious question anyone would ask who encountered this name for the first time would be, "Why should an Englishman have a French name?" As we know, the answer is because he was descended from Huguenot refugees, some of the many French Protestants who left their homeland after 1685, when Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes and thus deprived them of their religious and civic freedoms. This 'Revocation' ushered in a dark night of persecution and misery for the Protestants of France which lasted up till the French Revolution.

The family came from the small town of Villemur in the valley of the Tarn in south west France, near the city of Montauban. They were Counts of Boneval, and had roots in the area which went back hundreds of years: the family motto "Qui la cerca, la troba" (roughly translated - he who seeks will find) is in Occitan, the traditional language of the south of France.

This part of France had had a strong Protestant tradition since the middle of the 16th century, and many of the local aristocracy had been keen supporters of the reformed religion: perhaps as much as anything else as an assertion of their independence against the hegemony of Paris. Traditions of rebellion were strong, for this had also been the heartland of the Cathars, or Albigensians, those medieval 'heretics' who had been exterminated with such ruthlessness several hundred years before. The city of Montauban in particular had been a thorn in the flesh of the Catholic kings of France and had a history of religious independence; the city became known as '*la Geneve du Midi*' because of its Huguenot character and the existence of a Huguenot academy there to prepare young men for the pastorate.

It also had a tradition of religious conflict: in 1561 the local Huguenots sacked the Catholic churches and destroyed the 'idolatrous' adornments and statues, (See Figure 3) but in 1622 the boot was on the other foot and the royal soldiers of Louis XIII massacred the inhabitants after the conclusion of a long siege. After Louis XIV came into his majority in 1660 he determined to live up to his coronation oath to stamp out the heretics in his kingdom, and one of the two Huguenot 'temples' of Montauban was closed in 1664, and the other in 1683, part of a long and inexorable campaign throughout France to make life intolerable for the Huguenots.

The consequence was that many Huguenots fled to the refuge of Protestant countries like England, the Netherlands, Germany or Switzerland, and it is interesting that several other Australian families of

Huguenot origin can trace their origin to the same part of France - Delprat, Du Faur, Favenc and Latreille. Amongst the 'refugees' (we can thank the Huguenots for introducing this word into English) was Jean Henri Boneval de la Trobe (1670-1766), the great-great-grandfather of the first Lt-Governor of Victoria. He fled to Holland, took service with William of Orange, participated (and was wounded) in that decisive victory at the Boyne river in which Huguenot troops took such a significant part, and eventually settled in Waterford in the south of Ireland, where he became a manufacturer of sail-cloth and linen.

His son, James Boneval La Trobe (1702-1752) moved to Dublin, also manufactured sail-cloth, perhaps more successfully, and joined the Moravian church in 1750. Both his son, Benjamin La Trobe (1726-1786) and his grandson, Christian Ignatius La Trobe, were clergymen of that church. This brings us to our own Charles Joseph La Trobe, born in London in 1801 and reared in a family tradition of simple and pious Christianity, grounded in the German evangelism of the Moravians, and no doubt also influenced by the French Calvinism of his ancestors.



Figure 3

A Huguenot 'mereau' or communion token from the city of Montauban.

Source: Huguenot Society of Australia

What then connects him with these ancestors? Although he considered himself a thorough Englishman, we can perceive part of his Huguenot heritage in certain elements of his character, behaviour and interests.

First of all was a keen sense of civic duty and responsibility to his fellow men. He may have come to Port Philip as an inexperienced administrator, but he was determined to do his best and to overcome obstacles. An early letter, written to John Murray in 1840, sums up his pragmatic and cheerful attitude:

I have scrambled forward with as good courage as I could muster, not troubling myself much about difficulties that could be in advance, but just grappling with that of today.

His many public works bear witness to his desire to improve all aspects of the life of the young colony, and it is appropriate that a great library and a university should now bear his name.

In 18th century London, wealthy Huguenot businessmen took time off from their business activities to serve as directors of charities like 'La Providence', the Huguenot home for the aged poor (still in existence) or on the parish council of Christchurch, Spitalfields. For them, making money was important, but so was being part of a community and doing their duty in that community. Nor should we forget the Moravian tradition of Christian community in which La Trobe was raised, especially at the Moravian schools at Fulneck in Yorkshire and Fairfield, near Manchester.

Another interesting aspect of La Trobe was his internationalism. The Huguenot refugees became part of an international urban minority, similar to the Jews. One family might have representatives in London, Amsterdam, Dublin, or even St Petersburg or Charleston, South Carolina. Although they became loyal (and grateful) citizens of the countries of their adoption, this gave them a more cosmopolitan and international outlook than their indigenous compatriots. The wanderings of the La Trobe family took them to Holland, Ireland (Figure 4), England and America, and since the time of Charles Joseph they have spread even further.

Travel itself is a symptom of a desire to learn, and La Trobe was very well-travelled. He criss-crossed the colony on horseback, trying to go everywhere, see everything and meet everyone. The fact that he married a Swiss wife and spoke French very well alone would be enough to set him apart from many of his colonial brethren. Washington Irving said of him:

Having rambled over many countries, he had become, to a certain degree, a citizen of the world, and easily adapted himself to any change.

Strangely enough, another great traveller of 19th century Australia was also of Huguenot origin: Lady Franklin, the wife of Sir John Franklin the Lt Governor of Tasmania, was born Jane Griffin, the daughter of a Huguenot silk merchant in Spitalfields. She shared a lot in common with La Trobe, including a high-minded desire to do good, and a passion for the arts and education. She was the first woman to climb Mt Wellington above Hobart, and also the first to travel overland from Melbourne to Sydney.

Washington Irving's comments on La Trobe continued...

He was a man of a thousand occupations; a botanist, a geologist, a hunter of beetles and butterflies, a musical amateur, a sketcher of no mean pretensions....Never had a man more irons in the fire.

This reminds us of the eclectic tastes of intellectual young gentleman in the Victorian era. However it also provides a strange echo of the sheer breadth and variety of contributions made by Huguenot refugees (and their offspring) to British life in the 17th and 18th centuries. The Huguenots were an ingenious and hardworking lot who gave us (among other things) the Beaufort scale for measuring wind speed, the obstetric forceps, horticultural societies, friendly societies, the pressure cooker, life assurance, the thermometer, Roge's Thesaurus and oxtail soup!



Figure 4
Huguenot Cemeterin, Merrion Row, Dublin.
Members of the La Trobe family are buried here.
Source: Huguenot Society of Australia

Of course the breadth was also artistic as well as scientific. Although La Trobe interested himself in geology, botany, strange bunyips and mysterious archaeological finds, he had a great love for nature as a source of artistic inspiration too, probably fostered in his early travels in the Alps. I can't think of many other career civil servants who were also competent artists. The publication by the La Trobe Library of his watercolours was a fitting tribute to a talent which many did not know he had had. Not surprisingly he was the first of several Australian artists of Huguenot descent, including the landscapes artists Abram-Louis Buvelot and William Pignenit, and Benjamin Duterreau, who painted the Tasmanian aborigines. His artistic talents were inherited from his father, Christian La Trobe, who always carried a sketch book with him, though his real talents were musical, for he earned a reputation as a composer of hymns and chorales and won the friendship of Haydn.

The Huguenots included great artists among their ranks from the beginning (for example the ceramicist Bernard Palissy, or the sculptor Jean Goujon) but in exile they and their children are famous

for the applied arts: engraving, silversmithing, jewellery, printing, textiles etc. This combination of practical business and artistic endeavour explains a tradition which would allow a young man to excel in (or at least develop and enjoy) as many talents as he possibly could. For La Trobe there was nothing effete or unmanly about an interest in the arts.

Finally, and underlying all these other characteristics, we must not forget the strong sense of Christian faith which governed La Trobe's life and morality. He sprang from the tradition of a Christian minority who had chosen exile, loss of position and forfeit of possessions rather than abandon their faith, and his father and grandfather had chosen another branch of Christianity which emphasised a simple and uncomplicated relationship with God. Although I have not come across another Huguenot family which joined the Moravians, the move is not unexpected or out of character. In the 18th and 19th centuries the descendants of the Huguenots moved into several and various branches of Protestantism. Many (especially in Ireland) sought safety in numbers by joining the Anglican church. Others became part of the nonconformist movement, for example Edward Perronet who was a great friend and supporter of John Wesley. James La Trobe himself had been a Baptist before he became a Moravian. Antoine Benezet moved to Philadelphia, became a Quaker and founded schools for the children of Negro slaves. Others (for example the Perdriau family) stayed faithful to the Calvinism of their ancestors and joined the Presbyterians. One even became a prominent Catholic – Henry (later Cardinal) Newman was the son of a Huguenot mother from the Fourdrinier family.

Although La Trobe was not pompous or over-stern in his religious faith, it was a vital ingredient in making him the man that he was, and in giving him the courage and determination to carry on an extremely difficult task which brought him little thanks and small reward.

All these characteristics and qualities link him with his ancestry and the traditions of his forebears, but they do not necessarily mark him out as different from the best of his compatriots. The Huguenots assimilated well into British life because their values and attitudes, to a great extent, coincided with the values and attitudes of the host nation. The Huguenots, at their best, exemplified ways of thinking and behaving which were already developing in the societies and communities which they joined.

Robert Nash, March 2003

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<http://members.optushome.com.au/ozhug/>

La Trobe's 202nd Birthday Party

On Thursday 20 March 2003, a group of forty or so gathered at La Trobe's Cottage, Birdwood Avenue to celebrate his 202nd birthday. The event was hosted by the National Trust who had organised entertainment. The Victorian Historic Re-enactment Group sang and danced to an enthusiastic crowd of birthday well-wishers. Below, 'Lady Franklin' cuts the birthday cake as a toast to Victoria's first Lieutenant-Governor is drunk.



Figure 5

'Lady Franklin' cutting the 202nd Birthday Cake
Victorian Historic Re-enactment Group

Photo: Daryl Ross



Figure 6

From left: Liz Smith, Ross Smith, Mrs D Ross,
Peter Canaider

Photo: Daryl Ross

Down a La Trobe alley - but is it blind?

by Susan Priestley

While in Norwich recently, following paths suggested by our Norfolk-born vice-president, Richard Heathcote, I found the following letter on exhibition in the Norwich Castle Gallery with the watercolours of John Sell Cotman (1782-1842). It was written on 15 July 1839 from 42 Hunter Street Bloomsbury, Cotman's home for the last eight years of his life. [Warning: there may be inaccuracies in my transcription]

Madam, You write so feelingly and so well of your old drawing master La Trobe that I felt an irresistible desire to rummage up a portrait of him that I knew I possessed, which having found, I most respectfully beg that you will do me the honour to accept. It was thought a great likeness at the time + will be by you considered tolerable in so much as it represents a back front, his usual position as you know when in his studio before his portrait of his dear Queen & Friend, which picture he never turned his back upon, not having been taught in the school of George the 4th.

The Landscape he is represented as painting was considered by judges and critics his chef d'oeuvre, both for Drawing, Composition, Chiaro obscura and for Colour – for all of which he was most celebrated. His system of balancing Duck against Duck, Windmill against Church, Tree against tree and so forth – is now beginning to be estimated and acted upon – and we may fully expect after a few more hints from the "Art Union" to see his like again. The rather flattering likeness of the Queen, the editor will do well to have engraved for his next paper, but be sure he looks to his copyright, or he will be pirated.

The autograph [of] my friend Upcott wh. shd. you wish to part with it I'd take it at any price – the subject pleads my excuse. I am Madam with the greatest respect your most devot'd + obedient servant John S. Cotman.

Accompanying the letter is a delightfully witty coloured drawing, described by the Gallery as a cartoon. An elderly gentleman in eighteenth century dress - royal blue coat with buff breeches – is perched on a low stool with his back to the viewer, absorbed in painting. It matches the gentle irony of the letter about a person perhaps recently deceased.

The identity of the drawing master is intriguing. Did Charles Joseph La Trobe's artistic ability reflect a persistent family trait? Did he receive some training from this family member? And whatever happened to the portrait of the drawing master's Queen & Friend?

S D Kitson's biography of Cotman throws no direct light on these points but does illuminate some possible background links. In 1834, seeking to ensure his family's economic well-being, the artist became Professor of Drawing at London's new Kings College in the Strand, which in 1836 became a foundation institute of the University of London. Set up by Royal Charter early in Victoria's reign, the University's distinctive emphasis was on 'practical' science, medicine and engineering, where drawing was an essential skill.

Cotman's previous career as a Norfolk-based artist included the publication in 1822 of two monumental volumes of engravings, *The Architectural Antiquities of Normandy*. Mrs A M Hall, the addressee of the letter, may be a friend from that time, and 'Upcott' certainly was. William Upcott received one quarter of the profit from the volumes, probably in return for editing work. As librarian for the science-centred London Institute, also later absorbed into the University, Upcott is possibly the editor advised to engrave La Trobe's portrait of the Queen 'for his next paper' - perhaps an Institute or University publication.

Historians – this one at any rate – can always be drawn down such chanced-upon alleys in the hope they will not be blind, but open out into a wide court full of illumination. Who can say where this one may lead?

Susan Priestley

Obituary – Edward Carter II
'An Unchecked Engagement with Life'
by Dianne Reilly

Edward Carlos Carter II, Librarian of the American Philosophical Society and Adjunct Professor of History at the University of Pennsylvania, died on October 1, 2002, of a heart attack, at the age of seventy-four. With his passing the community of early American historians has lost a scholar of wide-ranging interests and accomplishments, a gifted administrator who implemented great changes in a major research library, a popular teacher of both undergraduates and graduate students, and an unstinting friend and colleague to many. All who had the privilege of knowing him will remember Ted Carter for his unbridled ebullience and generosity of spirit.

The most significant project of Professor Carter's scholarly career was the publication of the Papers of Benjamin Henry Latrobe, uncle of Charles Joseph La Trobe. The vast majority of the works of Latrobe, the great American architect and engineer, are housed at the Maryland Historical Society and, in the late 1960s, the Society decided to produce an edition of these works. Under Professor Carter's distinguished direction, the following volumes were published by Yale University Press: *Papers of Benjamin Henry Latrobe* (1976), *Virginia Journals of Benjamin Henry Latrobe, 1795-1798* (1977), *Journals of Benjamin Henry Latrobe, 1799-1820* (1980), and *Latrobe's View of America, 1795-1820* (1985). Copies of these books may be seen at the State Library of Victoria.

Ted Carter was an extraordinarily gifted man. His stellar academic and administrative career was tempered by a humanity all too uncommon among people of similar accomplishments. He was scholarly yet not pedantic; gregarious almost to a fault; at ease with everyone; beloved by his students; a leader in whatever enterprise he undertook; a keen judge of character; a devoted mentor who nurtured the careers of many.

Professor Carter frequently wrote that Benjamin Henry Latrobe – the historical figure he knew better than almost any living scholar – had 'an unchecked engagement with life'. This phrase, which captured Latrobe so perfectly, applied equally well to Professor Carter himself.

Dianne Reilly



Figure 7
Edward La Trobe Bateman
Grevillea La Trobeana
Wood engraving. Final engraved by Samuel Calvert for
*The Catalogue of the Melbourne Public
Library for 1861*
Source: *State Library of Victoria*

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