La Trobeana

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

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FRONT COVER

Thomas Woolner, 1825 – 1892, sculptor
Charles Joseph La Trobe
1853, diam. 24.0cm. Bronze portrait medallion showing the left profile of Charles Joseph La Trobe. Signature and date incised in bronze l.l.: T. Woolner. Sc. 1853:/M
La Trobe, Charles Joseph, 1801 – 1875. Accessioned 1894
La Trobe Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria.

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Introduction

This final issue of *La Trobeana* for 2009 focuses on the important part that travel played in the life of Charles Joseph La Trobe and his contemporaries.

La Trobe's adventurous spirit and strong desire to experience all that 'rambling' had to offer, resulted in the legacy of four published books of travelogue, as well as major reports in the British parliamentary papers. Like many in the aristocracy, but unlike most of his contemporaries, he was able to discover a new world for himself on foot or on horseback in parts of Europe, to visit the 'New World' of the United States, Mexico and the West Indies, and later to explore the hinterland of the Port Phillip District. Indeed, I could not resist including in this issue Dianne Reilly's compilation of Charles Joseph La Trobe's travels in the Port Phillip District and also in Van Diemen's Land. It is simply a list of the places he visited but is a most eloquent testimony to La Trobe's passion for travel, as well as his zeal for the role that defined his life's work as a mature man.

Others, of course, set out on the adventure of travelling to colonial New South Wales and making their way overland by horse and wagon on the more prosaic but equally important mission of finding good pastoral land. In early Melbourne, however, the mode of travel around the town quite quickly became not just a matter of necessity but, for some, an opportunity for the exhibition of status or newly acquired wealth.

Dianne Reilly, in her article 'La Trobe's Grand Tour', explores some aspects of Charles La Trobe's experience of travel as a young man, and offers some telling insights into his developing personality; Kenneth Park's account of the many and various ports of call of La Trobe in 'The Intrepid Traveller', from 1824 onwards, recalls for us his entertaining presentation at the Society's Annual General Meeting in August. Jim Badger's article 'The La Trobes came in their Jaunting Car' offers an intriguing insight into the intricacies of the notion of 'keeping a carriage'. Judy Macdonald, in her ground-breaking research about James Watson who travelled overland from Sydney in 1839 to establish his station, which he called 'Flemington', explores aspects of early settlement in the Port Phillip District that were so much a part of Charles Joseph La Trobe's world.

Loreen Chambers

Editor

La Trobe's Grand Tour

By Dr Dianne Reilly

La Trobe in Switzerland

After his years of formal schooling in Yorkshire, Charles Joseph La Trobe went to Switzerland at the age of twenty-three as tutor to the son and heir of Comte Frédéric de Pourtalès. This was La Trobe's first visit to the Continent, and every view charmed him: 'The sunset of a bright autumnal day, towards the end of October 1824, found me for the first time standing upon the shore of the Lake of Neuchâtel'. [1]

When La Trobe arrived in Neuchâtel on the Lake, he found a picturesque and flourishing university town on the shore, nestled at the foot of the Jura mountain range. The Lake, thirty-eight kilometres long, and ranging between three and eight kilometres wide, commands the attention from every perspective. Physically, La Trobe discovered the town to be a small, well laid-out civic centre where the *hôtels particuliers* [2] of the bourgeoisie lined well-kept boulevards. The town owes its origin to its value as an easily fortified location where, in former times, the population were well protected by the Jura to the north, the Lake to the south, and the River Seyon to the west. The construction of a massive château was begun on the highest vantage point in the twelfth century as a residence for the Counts of Neuchâtel and, by the time that La Trobe had arrived, this imposing building had become the centre of government for the canton of Neuchâtel. Dominated alternatively by the French and the Prussians, Neuchâtel was under Prussian rule from 1707 to 1798, and again from 1814. Neuchâtel had joined the Swiss Confederation in 1815, but continued under Prussian governance until 1857.

F. Kruger
Comte de Pourtales, with sons Albert (l) and Wilhelm, [1833]
Archives de l'Etat, Neuchatel, Switzerland

Social contact for the newly-arrived La Trobe was at the highest level. Not only did he frequent the Pourtalès mansion in the course of his teaching but, as an attractive and charming Englishman, he was greatly sought after as a guest in the salons of the merchants, bankers and nobility of Neuchâtel. In an era when many cultivated people were Anglophiles, he was also a frequent guest at the aristocratic country homes of the Neuchâtelois in various parts of Switzerland. It was often said at this period that everyone in Neuchâtel was related. Certainly, this was a fact among the noble families. La Trobe himself later wrote to his eldest daughter, Agnes, that Neuchatel was a place where 'cousins swarm like herrings in every corner of the country'.[3] A glance at any genealogical chart will show that the Merveilleux, Tribolet, Montmollin, Osterwald, Pury, Pourtalès and many more families were all interlinked by marriages across the centuries. At that time, Neuchâtel was, as it is now, also a centre for commerce, with many of the private Swiss banks located there.

In the course of his employment in Switzerland, La Trobe was diverted by the outdoor life. He became a pioneer alpinist and was noted for his skill as a mountaineer. He climbed peaks and later wrote about them for a readership in England which would never emulate him but only marvel at his feats. So talented a sportsman was he, and so great his love of nature, that he climbed previously unconquered mountains and crossed untraversed passes without the help of guides or porters. His climbs without companions were not entirely due to his love of being alone, although he had 'no objection to solitude'.[4] He was attracted by adventure and had the curiosity of the explorer. This foreshadowed many lone 'rides' in Port Phillip where, again, he was an explorer in another country. Despite a reluctance to detail his resources, La Trobe was

honest enough to record that his limited finances required him to travel independent of guides, because he 'did not feel at liberty to indulge in luxuries which I could possibly do without'.[5]

Travelling and Writing

After spending the winter of 1824-25 in Neuchâtel, tutoring his young charge and in private study, La Trobe set off alone in June 1825 on his first journey of discovery in the Alps, which was to last four months. He had lived his life to date almost exclusively within the safe confines of a known Britain, but the benefits of a family used to travel and his broad-based education cultivated in him an image of the world outside Britain which was totally new, intriguing and exciting. His broad knowledge, gained by reading history and literature with great relish, would have developed in him a desire for acquaintance at first-hand of places outside his experience. Added to this was, of course, the natural attraction of his European heritage and a wish to explore other cultures. In total, La Trobe made three extensive tours of Switzerland in his three years' sojourn there: the first, from June to October 1825; the second, between June and August 1826; and the third during September and October 1826. These are described in great detail in his book *The Alpenstock*, which was first published in 1829. [6]

Neuchâtel was the centre from which he set out on foot on each of his well planned travels. Although no mention is made of his tutoring of the young Comte de Pourtalès, it is reasonable to assume that this work occupied him only during the cooler months.

La Trobe's purpose, then, was to study the new-found landscape and to learn as much about this fascinating country while the opportunity was available to him. He was very focused in the planning of his first journey out from Neuchâtel.[7] He intended to begin his travels with a visit to Avenches on the other side of the Lake of Neuchâtel, and then to proceed to the historic and picturesque village of Morat before heading to Thun, one of the principal towns on the Lake of Thun, adjacent to the Simmenthal Valley. As came to be typical of the man, he was very systematic. The course of every day's journey was plotted in advance as, for example, his entry into the Simmenthal Valley:

> My plan was now to turn my steps towards the Stockhorn chain to the Westward, and to visit the Simmenthal which lies behind it, before entering upon the examination of the higher and more central portions of the district termed the Oberland.[8]

His account of his Swiss travels is a very analytical one, describing the physical features of the landscape, the flora and fauna he came across, and his various types of accommodation as each evening arrived. The style of writing is particularly clear and, while it sometimes lacks a certain personal dimension, the descriptive quality makes it engrossing reading. One particularly evocative passage is the description of his view of the high peaks of the Jungfrau and the Eigers from a vantage point on the Wengern-Alp, between Lauterbrunnen and Grindelwald:

> The Jungfrau and two Eigers, with the Wetterhorn and its neighbours to the Eastward, all rose before me in unclouded sublimity; the early morning sun lighting up one peak after another, and making the long waste of glaciers between them sparkle with the whiteness and brilliancy of burnished silver. As the sun rose higher, the light stole downward towards the immense range of dark granite precipices which supported them, and illuminated the exterior layers of fleecy vapour, rising midway from the depths of the Trümletenthal below.[9]

At the same time, he documented in his sketch-books the natural features and evidence of the built environment as he travelled.

In the course of the three separate journeys described, La Trobe climbed the sizeable mountain peaks of the Stockhorn (2193m) and the Righi-Kulm (1801m), among others, viewed the Eiger, the Münch and the Jungfrau at sunrise, and traversed the Simmenthal Valley. He penetrated the Simplon, Brunig, and the Great St Bernard's Passes, surveyed the great Rhône Glacier at Gletsch which is the junction of the Furka and Grimsel Passes, visited the cities of Berne and Geneva, and the towns of Montreux, Thun and Zurich, as well as touring the Rhineland. The Alpenstock conveyed in great detail La Trobe's love of solitude, a characteristic which was to mark his fifteen years in Australia when he so often escaped his administrative responsibilities to wander alone on horseback. He was direct and honest in his acknowledgement that

‘I had had, in former years, often reason to bewail a naturally restless mind and body’,[10] and in Switzerland he was able to indulge his wanderlust. Throughout his life, La Trobe was perfectly comfortable when alone. On more than one occasion, he made it clear that: ‘I had no objection to solitude’.[11] Although he was rarely lonely, this enjoyment of his own company revealed a certain unsociableness and a solitary disposition which would later alienate many of those whom he was sent to govern at Port Phillip.

The Grand Tour

La Trobe’s period of employment in Switzerland came to an end in March 1827. He had felt himself very much at home in Neuchâtel and in Erlenbach, and it was with regret that his residence there had come to an end:

> The thaw commenced early in March, and this was the signal for my departure from a country, which, much as I may love my own, had long ceased to be a foreign land to me.[12]

For the time being, his Swiss employment and adventures were over, and he had to face a rather unknown future.

Once his manuscript documenting Swiss scenery and manners was published in 1829, La Trobe, perhaps rather unexpectedly, found himself to be a celebrity, and he was now meeting with some degree of financial success. Possibly in reaction to the dread of wasting his whole life on what he saw as superficiality in his ‘rambling’ pursuits, La Trobe enrolled at Magdalene College, Cambridge in 1829 soon after the appearance of his book. However, he did not take up residency at the University.[13] Indeed, his application to formal study, if it happened at all, was short-lived for he was soon rambling again in the Tyrol and parts of Italy and Switzerland. The success with the publication of *The Alpenstock* confirmed his vocation as a travel writer and inspired him to return to Europe in search of another adventure that he might turn into a travel volume to enchant the curious and the vicarious traveler at home.

The itinerary selected by La Trobe for his next travels might be thought about as a very personalised ‘grand tour’, limited only by his particular interests in certain continental tourist attractions, and by the funds at his disposal. As a fashion which began in the sixteenth century, and flourished from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries, the European grand tour was the mechanism by which young people, in particular young men of a certain social echelon, traveled for the sake of their further education after leaving their school days behind them. In fact, ‘taking the grand tour’ was a type of ‘finishing’ to their education, before they took their place in society at home. At the time that La Trobe set out on his travels, he was bound to encounter young noblemen and others who, in the company of tutors or ‘bear leaders’,[14] as they were commonly known, were sent to the continent to experience as much as possible of a different way of life and of the world of art, and to gain a veneer of polish. A letter of introduction from some aristocratic contact was sufficient to gain *entrée* at the highest level into society in a foreign town or city. As well as undergoing a degree of educational ‘polishing’, young British tourists took advantage of the comparative freedom of their travels to ‘sow their wild oats’ before assuming the responsibilities of adulthood which awaited them on their return to their families in Britain. The historian Jeffrey Morrison has succinctly conveyed the message of Richard Lassels [15] for the parents of prospective travelers as ‘the attainment of social graces, military and political awareness, and physical endurance as the main benefits of the Grand Tour’.[16] Morrison also commented on a side-effect, possibly not looked for by doting parents: ‘there is no doubt that the inexperienced “boys” who undertook the Grand Tour saw escape from home as a chance to indulge in sexual adventures’.[17]

The Grand Tour, was, however, far from a British phenomenon since well-born young Europeans of all nations were drawn towards Rome, then the centre of the art world under the influence of classical antiquity. Gradually, the means of travelling to Italy, usually via Paris, and sometimes through Switzerland *en route*, became easier, though still sometimes fraught with danger and always a great adventure for young travellers.

La Trobe’s own voyage of discovery would have brought him into contact with many such tourists, especially in Venice and Rome. Guidebooks for venturers abroad made their first appearance in print as early as the sixteenth century. The volume of literature for the intending traveller increased on the booksellers’ market in the eighteenth century until, by the early to mid-nineteenth century it had reached a flood. Some of the particularly popular authors to capture the

imagination of the British reading public were James Boswell with Boswell on the Grand Tour: Germany & Switzerland (1764), and Italy, Corsica & France (1765-66), Tobias Smollett with his Travels through France and Italy (1766), and Thomas Nugent's popular and informative guide book, The Grand Tour, published in four volumes in 1778.[18] These titles would have been easily accessible to La Trobe who, to be sure, would have studied them carefully in preparation for his travels. At the time that La Trobe was contemplating his tour in Switzerland, he had access to reports of voyages of discovery to all parts of the 'new world', and specimens of animal and plant life, until then unseen in Britain, were exhibited and discussed in intellectual forums. Not only the world of literature, art and architecture excited this young man, but so too did the process and the results of scientific discovery.

La Trobe's appreciation of the picturesque was frequently conveyed very nicely to his readers in the imagery he used throughout the journey. By way of an example, the glories of Venice as described in *The Pedestrian* could easily complement the works of Caneletto, so well known to his readers:

> Surely there is nothing on earth to be compared to Venice. A mighty and populous city with its thousand churches and palaces, in whose construction the richest marbles are lavished, as though of no price and rarity – rising from the barren sand of the sea! Remark those tributary isles, spread abroad far and near with their steeples and convents, and the long streams of living light and colour which chequer the surface of the waters. Far and wide reign the signs of a vigor, which though long past the prime, has left too many tokens of force to be forgotten, and of beauty of too peculiar a character not to be regarded with delight. [19]

Similarly, the excitement of his first visit to Rome is evident:

> To tread upon the dust of the Roman Forum, to traverse the narrow streets of Rome in all directions in search of the vestiges of its ancient and the monuments of its modern grandeur, and to wander at even-tide through the matted brushwood and arches of the Palatine, or in the Coliseum, was a source of proud delight to me, as it has been to tens of thousands of pilgrims, of all countries and times. [20]

He gave a wonderfully witty, and yet biologically accurate, description of his study of the method used by a mosquito to sting him:

> Thus, at St. Quirico, I recollect, after having been repeatedly bitten by my winged assailants, when I would have sunk into transient repose, I … suddenly took the fancy into my head to see how in all the world they effected their entry into my skin … for it was curious to see the little blood-thirsty maurauder address himself to his work in quite a workmanlike manner – poise himself upon four of his delicate legs, while the other two were extended laterally, to keep him in balance. He then forced in his little transparent proboscis deeper and deeper, till I felt him in the quick … I could see that it acted just as well as that of an elephant, and drew up a minute stream of blood into his little thirsty stomach. [21]

La Trobe was attracted by the landscape and its differing characteristics wherever he went. An amateur scientist since his schooldays, when botany and other scientific subjects were part of the curriculum, he found topography fascinating and endeavoured to represent mountains and other natural features in pencil sketches to record the features of those parts of the world in which he found himself. By so doing, he was recording his personal experience and adding to his already considerable and eclectic knowledge of the world. It was the appeal of an environment new to him and the novelty of extraordinary landscape which attracted him as the amateur artist. His passions and abilities made him an eminently suitable candidate for a 'grand tour' which would have the dual purpose of giving him the space and the time to cure his emotional ills, and would allow him the intellectual exercise of recording his experiences in a journal that was destined for publication.

His diary of the Tyrolean journey allowed a glimpse of regret, and a definite concern he felt that he should aim to do more with his life:

> SUPPOSING the words [were] addressed to me "What dost thou here Elijah?" I have but a sorry answer to give – 'Lord, I am on my road to the Tyrol, and mean to write, and paint, and botanize, and amuse myself as well as I can, and perhaps shall publish another – 'pshaw this is humiliating and leads me to say internally – Well! I almost

> hope that much as I love this kind of life and the pursuits with which I enliven it this will be the last summer of the kind. I have travelled enough in this manner, enough to satisfy ordinate desire.[22]

La Trobe's European 'grand tour' was undertaken not only for personal enrichment, but also for scientific investigation of the natural environment. He had a great thirst for knowledge which prompted him to take advantage of every opportunity. On all his travels, he saw in the natural wonders before him the scientific and theological evidence of what he had already learned from years of theoretical study of the world's flora, fauna and geology.

Such a sad reflection on a period of years with few tangible results or achievements demonstrated La Trobe's great dissatisfaction with his aimless life as a dilettante. It indicated a despondency and yet, there was a hope or a desire, if not quite an aim to accomplish something worthwhile in his life before it was too late when he wrote:

> I pray God that I may have nobler aims and nobler purposes! – such as will not leave me to sit down and think as I have, and I fear may yet have to think during the course of this summer – 'Alas – I have spent my strength for naught'. [23]

La Trobe's European 'grand tour' was undertaken not only for personal enrichment, but also for scientific investigation of the natural environment. He had a great thirst for knowledge which prompted him to take advantage of every opportunity. On all his travels, he saw in the natural wonders before him the scientific and theological evidence of what he had already learned from years of theoretical study of the world's flora, fauna and geology. While admiring the sublime views he encountered at every turn, he reveled in the variety of specimens of flora he came across and collected for his own study. Above all, however, his observations confirmed for him the existence of God in the universe around him.

La Trobe was very much a man of his times. In his childhood, he learned of the intense exploration of new worlds which had accelerated during the eighteenth century and continued well into the nineteenth. A great deal of the new knowledge acquired through contact with remote countries and other cultures came back to Europe and was a source of intrigue to those who glimpsed specimens of hitherto unknown plants and animals in the collections of naturalists and their patrons. There was 'a growing vogue for natural history' as collectors went in search of the exotic for 'cabinets', libraries and gardens at home.[24] The British government was, of course, interested in the newly discovered lands far away, since they provided welcome advantages on both economic and imperialistic levels. Not only was Britain short of space for a huge population, but competitive colonization with other European powers was considerably important. Britain had 'to take a longer, strategic view of imperial matters',[25] to maintain its status and position of influence. The entrepreneurial activities of naturalists such as Sir Joseph Banks promoted the idea of a British empire across the world. Thus, itinerant botanists like La Trobe, collecting and categorising plants, were actually 'agents of empire'.[26]

The facts that La Trobe was influential as a teacher, and that he was a successful writer, a gifted artist and a serious amateur scientist, point to talents and expectations nurtured during his earliest years in his parents' care, and developed under the strong principles of the Moravian system of education. Further, the impact of his self-guided European 'grand tour' may be seen to have broadened both his cultural appreciation and his outlook on life in preparation for a career yet to unfold. However, his total approach to life was governed by his deep religious faith and by his profound sensibility towards nature and its divine properties. These were the most important facets of his character with which he approached every aspect of his life to come.

Thus, La Trobe's continuing education on the grand tour demonstrated how certain events and experiences shaped him into the adult he became. He was an introverted, immature young adult who had been content to rely on others to make decisions for him. It was not until he was alone in Switzerland, without the security of reliance on the family and the Moravian brotherhood which had so influenced his formation, that he really matured. The connections he made at this time in Neuchâtel, and his experiences of a wider world, foreshadowed his entire future: his lasting relationships, his career as a diplomat, and his preparedness to take on the responsibilities of administration of the Port Phillip District.

Endnotes

[1] Charles Joseph LaTrobe, *The Alpenstock*, (London: Seeley, 1829), p. 1.

[2] *Hôtels particuliers* are private town-houses.

[3] C J La Trobe to Agnes La Trobe, 30 August 1851, Archives de l'Etat, Neuchâtel.

[4] *The Alpenstock*, p. 6.

[5] Ibid.

[6] *The Alpenstock*, p. 7.

[7] Ibid.

[8] *The Alpenstock*, p. 16.

[9] *The Alpenstock*, p. 48.

[10] *The Alpenstock*, p. 5.

[11] *The Alpenstock*, p. 6.

[12] *The Alpenstock*, p. 38.

[13] A G L Shaw, *A History of the Port Phillip District*, (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1996), p. 171.

[14] Godfrey Hodgson, *A new Grand Tour; how Europe's great cities made our world.* (London: Viking, 1995), p. 6.

[15] Richard Lassels, *The Voyage of Italy* (London, 1670), Preface.

[16] Jeffrey Morrison, *Winckelmann and the Notion of Aesthetic Education* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 14.

[17] *Winckelmann*, p. 12.

[18] Modern editions of three of these works, as listed below, are still readily available:

James Boswell, *Boswell on the Grand Tour: Germany & Switzerland*, ed. Frederick A. Pottle. (London: Heinemann, 1953); James Boswell, *Boswell on the Grand Tour: Italy, Corsica and France*, eds. Frank Brady and Frederick A. Pottle (Melbourne: Heinemann, 1955); Tobias Smollett, *Travels through France and Italy*, ed. Frank Felsenstein (Oxford: The World's Classics, 1981); Thomas Nugent, *The Grand Tour*, 4 vols. (London: 1778).

[19] Ibid., p. 181.

[20] Ibid., p. 204.

[21] Ibid., p. 283.

[22] MS 13003. 'Journal of a journey in the Tyrol, 1829-30', La Trobe Archive, La Trobe Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria.

[23] Ibid.

[24] David Philip Miller and Peter Hans Reill, *Visions of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 3.

[25] Ibid., p. 5.

[26] Ibid.

The Intrepid Traveller: Charles Joseph La Trobe

By Kenneth W Park

The following article contains some observations taken from the address Kenneth Park presented to the Annual General Meeting of the Charles Joseph La Trobe Society on 11 August 2009

La Trobe Society member Kenneth W. Park is Curator of Collections at Wesley College, Melbourne and a freelance art curator, presenter, fund-raiser, tour leader and writer. As a lecturer/tour leader, Kenneth makes well over 140 presentations annually for universities, museums, conferences and cultural organizations. An inveterate traveller himself, making at least ten overseas trips a year, he lives by the motto that "life is a grand tour, make the most of it". He has tertiary qualifications in fine arts, museum studies, history and international relations. Kenneth's strong professional interest in cultural and architectural history is reflected in an association of over fifteen years with the National Trust as a leader of walking tours and visits to historic buildings and places. He has led tours for Australians Studying Abroad since 2004. Kenneth's interests are many and include travel, food, wine, arts, architecture, history and "the good life".

Charles Joseph La Trobe (1801-1875) is best remembered as the Superintendent of the Port Phillip District of New South Wales and the first Lieutenant Governor of the colony of Victoria. During his tenure, La Trobe would play a fundamental role in laying governmental foundations, and shaping the future direction for Melbourne and Victoria. He served with great distinction in what were challenging times: Victoria would be transformed from a small but successful colonial outpost into one of fastest growing cities of the Empire, spurred on by the thousands of people who flocked to Melbourne for the gold rush of 1851. In 1854, La Trobe left his post knowing he had worked hard and honestly to do his best for Victoria's future development. By the 1880s, the phrase Marvellous Melbourne had been coined to describe one of the brightest jewels in Queen Victoria's imperial crown. Today, many Melbournians enjoy the legacy of La Trobe's remarkable foresight; for instance, the parks that ring the heart of our city owe a great deal to La Trobe's desire to see that large areas of land be reserved for public parks for the enjoyment of the populace.

Much has been written about La Trobe's personal attributes and accomplishments as well as actions in office. One of the most fascinating aspects of the life of Charles La Trobe was that he was an intrepid traveller in the Victorian Age. He travelled in Europe, North America (United States, Mexico and Canada), the Caribbean (including Panama), Australasia and across the Pacific. La Trobe travelled with purpose. On his journeys, he did more than observe and merely experience; rather he recorded and commented in his diaries and produced an extraordinary visual legacy in the form of pencil and pen and ink sketches, and watercolours of places visited. These images were the equivalent of a photograph album of memories. La Trobe's accounts of his travels are an invaluable historical resource on the man, and importantly the times in which he lived. It is said that travel broadens the mind and La Trobe certainly embraced this idea. True to his Moravian upbringing that valued education, he travelled seeking experiences and knowledge and critically recorded and analysed, in this way shaping ideas and forming views for application in the conduct of his life.

Albert-Alexandre de Pourtalès, 1812-1861
Pencillings by the Way, [La Trobe sketching on horseback], c.1834
Archives de l'Etat, Neuchâtel, Switzerland

La Trobe travelled in an era when worldwide travel was burgeoning, helped along by the technological advancements of the Industrial Revolution. Although long distance travel was still challenging and at times very dangerous, it would become easier, efficient and above all else faster, particularly with the advent of railways and the gradual movement from the reliance on sail to the reliability of steam. Although it must be said that La Trobe happily walked and hiked great distances, he was also conveyed on his journeys by horse, carriage, riverboat, sail and steam ships.

La Trobe was born in London in 1801. His father Christian was an educated man and a well-travelled missionary who counted amongst his friends the composer Franz Joseph Haydn. As he grew into a young man Charles Joseph would have been aware of many history-making events which were occurring, such as the rise and fall of Napoleon, the emergence of the United States of America, the increasing impact of the Industrial Revolution, the rise of the British Empire and so on…. La Trobe was educated at Fairfield Boys' Boarding School, a Moravian institution in Manchester where he would not have had to travel far to see the impact of the Industrial Revolution. In 1824 he moved to Neuchâtel, located on the Lake of Neuchâtel in the beautiful mountainous country of Switzerland to tutor the family of the Count de Pourtalès. He stayed there until 1827 during which time he developed a reputation as a mountaineer and became a founding member of the local alpine club. He climbed mountains and traversed passes often without guides or porters. In 1829, La Trobe proved that he was more than a casual observer of the landscapes he traversed by publishing The Alpenstock: Or Sketches of Swiss Scenery and Manners. This was book was followed by The Pedestrian: A Summer's Ramble in the Tyrol in 1832.

La Trobe accompanied the young Count Albert de Pourtalès on an ambitious tour of North America in 1832. They visited the major cities of the United States of America, including the yet to be famous city of Chicago, and sailed down the mighty Mississippi river to New Orleans, as well as riding into the prairies with the American author Washington Irving. This trip to places often poorly mapped was described by Washington Irving in his diaries. La Trobe's own account of the journey was published in London in 1835 as The Rambler in North America: 1832-1833, and was closely followed in 1836 with The Rambler in Mexico: 1834.

After the North American trip La Trobe found his way back to Switzerland and married Sophie de Montmollin at the British Legation in Berne on 16 September 1835. However, he was soon travelling again, this time at the behest of the British Government to the West Indies in 1837. He was charged with reporting the measures required, especially in education to fit the recently liberated West Indians for freedom. The La Trobe family had been active in the anti-slavery campaigns. He submitted three reports that year and still found time to publish The Solace of Song – a book of short poems inspired by scenes visited on a continental tour especially of Italy.

Clearly the success of his work for the British Government contributed greatly to his appointment to the Port Phillip District in 1839. He arrived in September of that year with his family and their now famous prefabricated house. La Trobe had not served in the armed forces nor government, so he arrived with no formal experience or training in this role. However, he was blessed with an agile mind and possessed many skills and interests. He was strongly motivated and applied himself with a good measure of seriousness and propriety. During his tenure from 1839 to 1854, La Trobe faced many challenges as he formalised the governmental arrangements for a rapidly growing settlement and later colony. In these heady days, La Trobe and his contemporaries were trying to form the institutions of society, as well as to lay the foundations for a well-planned European-style city that would become 'Marvellous Melbourne'. Conflicts and controversies were to be expected. Nonetheless, La Trobe found time to thoroughly explore the territory under his jurisdiction. He traversed Victoria on foot and horseback. During his tenure, his responsibilities extended for a period of four months to oversight of the administration of Tasmania, and he also enjoyed exploring its landscapes.

La Trobe left Melbourne in 1854. When he had arrived, he found a settlement of largely wattle and daub structures. When he left, Melbourne boasted a population of nearly 80,000 souls, the Legislative Council of the new colony of Victoria was established, telegraph connected Melbourne to Williamstown, and Australia's first railway from Melbourne to Sandridge was about to commence. Many cultural institutions had been established, and the University of Melbourne and the Public Library of Victoria, Melbourne's own 'British Museum of the Southern Hemisphere' had been established. La Trobe's wife Sophie had already retuned to Europe and sadly, as he left Melbourne, he learned of his wife's death via a newspaper article. La Trobe would return via the Pacific and Panama (making the land crossing to the Atlantic side) through the Caribbean to England. This journey allowed visits to Norfolk Island, New Zealand and Tahiti on the Pacific crossing. La Trobe has left us with some fine artistic impressions of these idyllic and exotic locations.

Back in Europe, Charles La Trobe would eventually marry Sophie's sister, Rose, in 1855. He was never to hold another major posting. He spent his retirement in Switzerland and England. His eyesight was rapidly failing and his battles to obtain a pension for his service limited the scope of his activities. He would die in England on 4 December 1875.

La Trobe lived to life to the fullest: an indefatigable worker and an intrepid traveller in search of knowledge and experience. In this respect, he should be regarded as more than just a traveller. La Trobe assiduously recorded his experiences in words and illustrations, and this would benefit future generations of Victorians, as he drew on his observations and experiences in making decisions in order to create a fair and just society with sound institutions, to ensure that we might live as the motto of Victoria states in 'peace and prosperity'.

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"The La Trobes came in their jaunting car": Keeping a Carriage in the Age of La Trobe

By Dr Jim Badger

Dr Jim Badger is a Melbourne librarian whose post-graduate studies at Latrobe University looked at the ways that horse-drawn carriages shaped the development of a sense of Australian identity throughout the nineteenth century. He is currently working with the Australian Carriage Driving Society, together with enthusiastic volunteers and museum professionals, to research and build a National Database of Horse-drawn Vehicles.

One unfortunate but unexplored consequence of the disgraceful under-compensation that dogged Charles La Trobe throughout his early career as Superintendent of the Port Philip District was his inability to afford to 'keep his carriage'.

'Keeping one's carriage' seems an innocuous enough phrase to modern readers, but it was a concept pregnant with meaning to our forebears. Just what did it entail and why was an initial lack of a carriage – and later on, the gift of the wrong sort of carriage - a problem for La Trobe?

It could be argued that, far from having its origins in particular needs for personal transport, England's rise as the world's pre-eminent carriage-building and carriage-owning nation throughout the 18th and 19th centuries was one of the outward and visible signs of the contest for power and prestige between competing forces within English society. Nice judgements about the rank and means of people could be easily made by observing how they travelled. It was remarked of the English that:

> In travelling, as in other phases of life, there were ranks and dignities. The lord with his "flying chariot" looked down upon the squire with his coach and four. The squire looked down upon the horseman. The horseman looked down upon coach travellers. Coach travellers looked down upon those poor people who travelled by the stage-wagon. And those in the stage-wagon looked down upon the still poorer who plodded their way on foot. [1]

Thanks to the intense rivalry between competing social groups, mere ownership of a vehicle bought no *entrée* into the ranks of 'carriage folk'. Country clergy and yeomen farmers, town professional men, prosperous tradesmen and merchants possessed some sort of vehicle, but the need for practical transport was more important than owning an equipage which advertised its owner's superior status. Vehicles designed for mundane needs were characterized by their sturdy build and infelicitous lines and constituted no threat to their social betters. Saintly old Bishop Grantly in Trollope's novel of provincial Barchester

> had certainly kept his carriage, as became a bishop; but his carriage, horses, and coachman, though they did well for Barchester, would have been almost ridiculous at Westminster. [2]

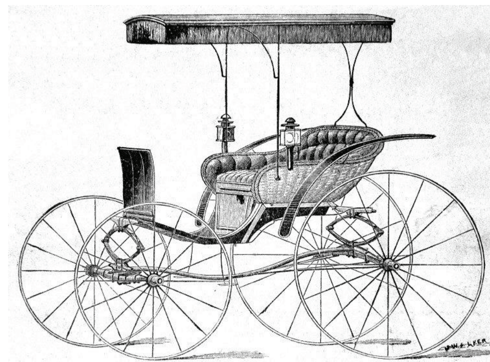
As England grew rich, an elaborate ritual of carriage ownership and driving thrived, covering every aspect of the expensive vehicle and its exquisite occupants. To scrimp or, worse still, omit the least scintilla of the display was unthinkable. The seasonal and very public migrations of the wealthy, gentry or aristocracy between their estates and various country houses and London, so far from being aimless peregrinations, played a critical role in defining and consolidating the composition and leadership of the ruling *élite* in a period of rapid change and unrest, [3] and provided the public with an impressive public display of England's ruling *élite*. Thus, the declaration of a poll called for a display of ruling-class splendour, such as Lord Salisbury's progress into Hertford to claim his General Election victory in

> an open carriage drawn by four fine horses. On the near side rode two postilions in white buckskin breeches and cockade hats; pale blue satin rosettes shone on their dark livery coats, matching those on the horses' ears. An equally elegant coachman and footman sat enthroned high on the box of the carriage, which was followed by two mounted grooms. [4]

The London "Season" was the epicentre of this rarified world, when young women formally entered Society, marriages were arranged and solemnized and would-be entrants to the Upper Ten Thousand's ranks were scrutinized. Carriages were indispensable for the Season's activities, particularly the promenade in Hyde Park, 'this large open drawing-room which in the season London daily holds' in which was held 'the great exhibition of English wealth and health, beauty, where feminine charms are on view and the price may be appraised. [5]

Naturally, there was a specific type of carriage for specific purposes, often confined to use at particular venues or times of the day. On their country estates, gentlemen maintained a family coach for local journeys and a post-chaise or britzka for longer journeys, such as the Grand Tour. Light chaises, whiskeys, dog carts or gigs carried landlords to inspect property or go shooting or coursing. Waggonettes or Sociables facilitated short pleasure jaunts.

For daytime use in town, the open Barouche was *de rigueur.* Essentially similar but equipped with two folding hoods, Landaus found favour with families who required a closed carriage for everyday use but could not justify the additional expense of keeping an open carriage. The light, elegant, low-built Basket Phaeton enabled women to make graceful entrances and exits from their vehicle and show off their fashions to best advantage while driving.



A Basket Phaeton
Jaunting Car
Horse-drawn vehicles NY, Dover, 1994.

Town life was unthinkable without a Coach, an enclosed, capacious and impressive vehicle designed to be driven from the box by the family coachman. The Dress Coach or its smaller relative the Chariot, 'blazoned with arms and coronets', its interior lined with silk and lace, was *de rigueur* for evening use, or for formal occasions connected with Court or parliamentary ceremonial.

As much, if not more attention, was given to the purchase and care of the horses, as to the selection of the carriage. The English devoted much effort to producing fine carriage horses but the improvements came with a heavy price tag, as an early nineteenth century observer lamented:

> The animal formerly in use cost from £30 to £50 - two hundred guineas is now an everyday price for a cabriolet horse and 150 guineas for a coach-horse for private or for a gentleman's work. A pair of coach-horses, fit for London, and well broken and bitted, cannot be purchased for under 200 guineas. [6]

In England coach driving, elsewhere regarded as a job for servants, was esteemed as a gentlemanly exercise which could be indulged without loss of caste. This passion for taking up the reins, which Europeans found inexplicable, can be traced back to the rise of the fast mail coach system in the late eighteenth century, coupled with the propensity of the English to pack their male children off to boarding school. Young men, travelling to and from school or university, 'disdained all coaches except his majesty's mail'.[7] Not infrequently, though quite illegally, they bribed their coach drivers to teach them the art of driving four-in-hand, thus founding a style of coach design and coach driving which still resonates today.[8] The scions of landed families, dressed faultlessly as gentlemen, found it exhilarating to drive like coachmen, entering so fully into that role that on England's turnpikes, there were 'gentlemen aping lords, and lords aping groom. [9]

For gentlemen, driving formed part of a well-rounded education, since it:

> not only requires great bodily strength, good nerve, and a quick eye, but, being an expensive amusement, is mostly confined to the aristocracy and persons of great wealth, with whose habits it is principally associated, and indicates some of that vigour of body which generally distinguishes the British gentry. [10]

A man who could drive a coach for hours on end, at speeds that doctors warned could cause apoplexy to unwary travelers, was clearly an heroic figure. The 4th Lord Lyttelton claimed that he was far prouder of having carried off the not-insignificant feat of turning his tandem around the Great Court of Trinity College, Cambridge, than he was of winning the 1836 Craven Scholarship for his prowess in Greek and Latin. [11]

Some claimed that driving, like other manly sports such as boxing, contributed to the moral education of a gentleman, since its practice would

> inspire confidence in difficult situations, and suggest resources in danger. The consequent influence on the moral conduct of man is such, that, by a courage which is well founded, because it springs from a perfect knowledge of his own powers, he is often enabled to render the most important services to others. [12]

In 1816, it was estimated that £500 was the lowest level of annual income which allowed a person to maintain a position in Society and maintain at least one carriage. Twenty years later, it was estimated that keeping a modest one-horse conveyance (estimated to cost £700) might be done for as little as £54 per annum, if one's groom doubled as a carriage servant or footman or was only needed occasionally.[13] Such thrift was only possible in the provinces, for the cost of keeping a modest single-horse gig in London was put at £150 (three times the average income most English people enjoyed), while a family carriage cost at least £400 to maintain.

Conventional wisdom dictated that 10% of household income had to be allowed for to keep a horse and carriage, while 8% was allowed for male servants, including a coachman. Jane Austen no doubt spoke from personal experience when she wrote in *Sense and Sensibility* of Mrs. John Dashwood's calculating spite which condemned her husband's step-mother and daughters to living on £500 a year. With this annual income, Mrs. Dashwood would be constrained to keep no carriage or even riding horses and few servants,

which would effectively prevent her from maintaining a position in Society. The Warden of Hiram's Hospital enjoyed an annual income of £800 and drove a modest pony carriage. Mary and Agnes Berry were sisters whose London salons attracted the cream of Regency and early Victorian intelligentsia. Despite their social standing, the Berrys were neither wealthy nor aristocratic, so upon her engagement to General O'Hara, Mary drew up a careful budget for their future household, reckoning on an annual income of just over £2,000, and stressing that this would allow them to live modestly. Only one carriage could be maintained, while £25 had to be allowed annually for repairs. It was too expensive to maintain saddle horses and the budget could only run to one pair of Job (hired) Horses for eight months of the year at a cost of £125, which included the coachman's wages. Allowance was made for two men servants (most probably footmen whose duties included attending upon the carriage when travelling) and an Upper Man Servant, and their liveries cost £80 a year. [14]

Colonial Australia

Early visitors to the Australian colonies were intrigued by the number of carriages found crowding the streets. But the reason is clear: just as at Home, carriage ownership was the most obvious means by which a new arrival, or the reformed felon, could proclaim his worthiness for *entrée* to the more elevated circles of colonial society. It was scarcely to be wondered at that it was:

> the fashion for every one that can afford the luxury to keep some kind of conveyance; and they are of every description; one is astonished and amused to see the sort of personages that own these carriages; and startled at the mass of vulgarity and pride that occasionally, indeed most generally, roll and loll in them in all the consciousness of wealth, happy in the belief that their neighbour has forgotten the means by which the chariot was acquired, and is yet maintained.[15]

Early Melbourne too was notable for its carriages, despite the roughness of its roads, the primitiveness of its public and private buildings and the not-inconsiderable expense of importing and maintaining a vehicle. Nevertheless, from its foundation, the unspoken rule of 'by their carriages shall ye know them' pertained, and early Melbourne notables were clearly identified by their carriages. A memoir of early days in Port Phillip records that 'Mr. Kerr, who had a station on the Goulburn, but who resided near the Hawthorn punt' kept a carriage and pair.[16] William Westgarth remembered that:

> the first of our sober community to set up a carriage and pair was Mr. Henry Moor. I remember looking upon that vehicle with a sense of awe, possibly not without envy at what was to most of us the entirely unattainable. I speak of the real Hyde Park Corner article, and not the old "shandrydan" with which some remote squatter might at times have galloped into town, poising himself with practised and needed adroitness on nature's bush track, behind a pair or more of the hundreds of nags on his run.[17]

This phenomenon was driven by the need to create a social pecking order out of the settlement's chaotic formative years. On Sunday 15 November 1835, only weeks after Melbourne's foundation, the ex-convict John Pascoe Fawkner and his wife

> took the first ride in a chaise that ever was had in Port Philip (sic). Rode down to the Salt Lagoon and returned back another way very good driving and although through the Trees found no inconvenience from the deadwood.

Victoria and Italy as Charles La Trobe would have seen them

Edward La Trobe Bateman 1816-1897. Stables and Hay House at Jolimont [ca. 1852-4].
La Trobe Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria.

S T Gill, 1818-1880. Wool-drays, [1864].
La Trobe Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria.

Charles Joseph La Trobe, 1801-1875. Ezzolino's Tower, Padua [1830].
Collection: National Trust of Australia (Victoria). Deposited on long-term loan in La Trobe Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria.

Charles Joseph La Trobe, 1801-1875. Flemington, Moonee Ponds, [c.1850].
Collection: National Trust of Australia (Victoria). Deposited on long-term loan in La Trobe Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria.

S T Gill, 1818-1880. Digger's Wedding in Melbourne [1869]
La Trobe Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria.

S T Gill, 1818-1880 St Paul's Church from the South End of Swanston Street in the 'Fifties', [1857].
La Trobe Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria.

The jaunt was not merely an excuse to take the air after hectic weeks of settling in: Fawkner was making the point that he had risen in the world through his industry, in comparison to his drunken and quarrelsome neighbours, the Batmans, who, though rapidly sinking in squalor, could rightly claim seniority as founders of the settlement.[18] The need to parade was so great that, in the absence of a chaise, any wheeled vehicle would do. At a land auction-cum-picnic, Edward Curr noticed 'one eminent lawyer…driving several of the fair sex in an ammunition waggon, with a pair of horses. [19]

The Port Phillip District's burgeoning prosperity encouraged pastoralists to live and entertain like lairds in country houses. 'Campbellfield', the property which the dashing young wealthy ex-Guardsman James Lyon Campbell, who had arrived in the colony with La Trobe, established on Melbourne's outskirts, was one such centre. These were the good old days that Rolf Boldrewood fondly remembered, in which life seemed to consist of an endless round of social engagements, encouraging those who could to 'go down the road' in expensive turnouts in an antipodean recreation of English gentry institutions like the procession of carriages to Epsom on Derby Day. Boldrewood recalled one such day when:

> A large party had been invited by Mr. and Mrs. de Castella to spend a week at Yering, when a picnic, a dance and all sorts of *al fresco* entertainments were included in the programme.
>
> We were to meet at Fairlie House, South Yarra, and the day being propitious, the gathering was successful; the *cortège* decidedly imposing. Charlie Lyon's four-in-hand drag led the way; Lloyd Jones's and Rawdon Greene's mail *phaetons*, with carriages and dog-carts, following in line - it was a small Derby day.[20]

Such displays affirmed that the colony had put down secure foundations, and the miraculous appearance of quite splendid horse-drawn vehicles in these early years pointed to a golden future rather than the drab reality of early settlement. Richard Howitt delighted in the 'animating sight' of

S T Gill, 1818-1880
Duke of Edinburgh: arriving at the Course, [1867]
La Trobe Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria

> the daily spectacle of carriages open and close, filled with gay families of the wealthy settlers located on the rich banks, far and near, of the River Yarra…there was a perpetual gleam of rich beavers, ostrich plumes, veils streaming in the air, and parasols showing their rich silkiness to the sun. The bush was alive most days with their pleasant and picturesque groups. The parade, he wrote, 'did our hearts good'.[21]

This was the tiny hothouse world that the new Superintendent was sent to administer in 1839. Though beyond doubt an English gentleman by birth, education and connections, La Trobe presented his 'subjects' with a puzzle – how to 'read' him. They were baffled by his formal airs and graces, his French-speaking Swiss wife, his bookish past, his love of solitude, his high-minded speeches and even his name. People could not refer to the outward trappings of office for clues to the man – La Trobe eschewed most of the symbols of rank (though he was mercilessly pilloried for his punctilio regarding wearing his uniform). He was content with a modest cottage as his abode for his entire posting. He avoided speculating in land or livestock. He wisely recognized that his salary of £800 was far too small for him to 'keep his carriage'. He seemed to enjoy walking and riding, and evidently did not believe that either was beneath his dignity. If he ever hankered after an equipage, he wisely abstained from cutting corners in order to secure one, as did a Western Australian contemporary in the governing line.

When the German botanist Carl Freiherr von Hugel met Albany's Lieutenant Governor Sir Richard Spencer, he was scarcely able to believe his eyes, recording that:

> I arrived at Sir Richard's at two o'clock to go to Albany with the family… I had anticipated that I would, perfectly naturally and at a gentle pace, stroll down to Albany with Lady Spencer on my arm, taking about half an hour ... But I was not a little surprised when I saw that two mules had been harnessed and was curious to know what kind of a vehicle they were destined to draw. Now Sir Richard had brought with him a two-wheeled cart for carrying stones and timber. On this, two chairs had been placed and he invited me to mount this contraption; naturally I declined. Lady Spencer and Miss Spencer then placed themselves on these perilous seats and one of the two pretty little girls was laid down between them. The two mules were harnessed, one in front of the other, and the muleteer walked ahead. Sir Richard opened the procession, mounted on the last of the three mules, in full uniform with his tricorn on his head, his cross and medals on his breast and his sword by his side. One of his sons and I brought up the rear of the procession.[22]

Yet the lack of a carriage undoubtedly exacerbated the impression of the Superintendent's awkwardness and remoteness – the official arriving on foot commands scant respect and is circumscribed in his movements, while the man on horseback towers above the crowd, rather than driving amongst them at a suitable level for seeing and being seen. The prestige automatically conveyed on its owner of a well-turned out equipage in early Melbourne has already been noted; had La Trobe been possessed of a spanking, well-horsed Mail Phaeton by a reputable London maker, many people would have been convinced of its owner's sound judgment.

La Trobe's plans for the Botanic Gardens represented a golden chance missed to boost his popularity amongst all classes, but not being a 'reinsman' himself, it never occurred to him to include a carriage drive in the design. A drive, such as the one Sir Charles FitzRoy laid out in Sydney's Domain, could have become a fashionable resort and an antipodean equivalent of Hyde Park in which all classes mingled and took the air. The occasional glimpse of the Superintendent in his equipage would have been the highlight of an outing to the Gardens. To the end of the horse-drawn era, Melbourne had no such carriage drive.

The lack of a carriage confined the La Trobe family close to home. Had they been so inclined, it would have been impossible for them to join in week-long entertainments at Yering or excursions to 'Campbellfield', where La Trobe might have been able to mix in an informal setting and present a less aloof face. There would have been times when a well-stocked coach house would have been advantageous: La Trobe was an enthusiastic and observant traveller, avid in his pursuit of the scientifically interesting and the scenically thought-provoking whenever his official duties allowed this indulgence, and clearly it grieved him that he could not share his delight with his family. But to his dismay, Sophie La Trobe's precarious health frequently prevented her from accompanying him. He was never happier than during the infrequent times when 'dear S. and little Charles' could travel with him as they did when he visited the Dandenong district.[23]

As it was, La Trobe kept no carriage at all until bequeathed an Irish Jaunting or 'outside' car by the untimely death in 1844 of his friend J.D. Lyon Campbell. Far from enhancing his status, this chance acquisition exposed him to further ridicule, whatever pleasure it brought to himself and his family; for amongst the English, a Jaunting Car was considered scarcely a carriage at all, being an uncouth vehicle fit only for Irish peasantry. If a gentleman like Lyon Campbell deigned to give a Jaunting Car room in his coach house, it was surely only because of its utility in and around the estate; certainly it would never be seen beyond the gates. To do so would invite ridicule. Even the diarist Georgiana McCrae, who could never afford an equipage of her own, confided to her diary with an air of amused condescension on 8 April 1845 that: 'the La Trobes came in their jaunting-car.[24]

Should La Trobe have considered this odd bequest as a rather subtly- crafted insult from beyond the grave from a quondam friend? A man more alive to the intricacies of 'keeping one's own carriage' than Charles Joseph La Trobe would have had no doubt on this score. He would have quietly disposed of the Jaunting Car, turning it into matchwood after a decent interval, rather than making full use of it.

In the long run, Lyon Campbell's equivocal gift proved ill-omened. La Trobe was absent on his travels in 1848 when Sophie suffered a fall while out in the Jaunting Car and the family dated her subsequent gradual decline which ended in her death in 1854 from that accident.[25]

While it is clear that there was no way that La Trobe could assert his position in society through ownership of a stylish coach and four, his humble cottage featured stabling for the two or three horses he used in his ninety-four extensive journeys around the colony. By 1853, the stables were enlarged to house the modest barouche he eventually acquired in which to transport his wife and his Melbourne-born children on visits to friends and neighbours.

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James Watson and 'Flemington': a Gentleman's Estate

By Judy Macdonald

Judy Macdonald was for 15 years a reference and research librarian at the La Trobe Library, State Library of Victoria. Since then she has retired to Healesville where she is undertaking a number of interests; in particular, she is participating in the important project of indexing The Argus newspaper.

Wordy advertisements for the imminent sale of the Flemington Estate of James Watson, Esq., appeared across several columns of consecutive issues of the *Port Phillip Gazette* during October 1849. William Easey was instructed to sell by auction, in one lot, the freehold property of 310 acres – suburban sections 14 and 15 in the Parish of Doutta Galla - together with buildings, the 'Flemington Hotel', family residence, blacksmith's and butcher's shops. If not sold as a whole the details of the forty separate lots follow, giving a vivid picture of the property which ran along the Moonee Ponds to join the city reserve at Main's Bridge. This bridge linked Melbourne to the Macedon road, later Mount Alexander Road.

A gentleman's estate indeed! And one which caught the eye of Charles Joseph La Trobe who sketched the pastoral idyll, identifying it as 'Flemington, Moonee Ponds'. (See centre page). This sketch may previously have been thought to be of the young suburb, but it is arguable that the necessity of a locating address, Moonee Ponds, and the fact that the Ponds are clearly pinpointed by name within the sketch, makes it almost certain to be of the estate. The aspect is from high land, perhaps the Macedon road, looking across undulating pastures. The finer details indicate large buildings clustered around by outbuildings.

The hotel and gardener's house on 21 acres fronted the 'great road to Mount Macedon'. The hotel, a stone built 'messuage or tenement', had three sitting rooms, five bedrooms and attached coach house and stables. In *The Argus* of 20 December 1847 architect Charles Laing sought contractors for a new inn on the Moonee Moonee Ponds. In the same press on 1 February 1848, James Dunbar advertised that he had taken on Flemington Hotel on Moonee Moonee Ponds at Main's Bridge. In August of that year the Moonee Moonee Ponds Farmers Society planned a ploughing match on unploughed land near the hotel. [1]

On another 18 acres stood the Watson family residence, with seven rooms and detached coach house and stable. This lot included the butcher's shop and residence and a two roomed cottage and also faced the Macedon road. Lot 5 included the Flemington Stockyards fronting the Macedon and Geelong roads, while lot 40 contained 'the brickfields'.

Much has been written about James Watson and the Scottish pastoral enterprise of Watson and Hunter, which involved several sons of Alexander Hunter of Edinburgh and his nephew, John 'Howqua' Hunter. Much of this writing is uncomplimentary to Watson, inferring ineptitude and even fraud. Alexander Hunter as the Kennedy family lawyer had access to their backing for the Australian company, hence the Marquess of Ailsa, a leading Kennedy, headed the formidable list of titled shareholders. Young Kennedys also joined the company and sailed to Port Phillip.

Watson arrived at Port Phillip with the young Alexander Hunter, for whom he was guardian, in June 1839 and by August they were in New South Wales procuring cattle and convicts for the long drive south. John 'Howqua' Hunter had preceded Watson to the colonies, purchasing property to enable convict assignments and establishing staging posts, such as that on Gilmore Creek at Tumut.

Their first head station was at 'Keillor', Salt Water River. Speculation has arisen on this being named by Watson after 'Keillor' in Fyfe. (The Victorian name later dropped the double l.) More of that later. Hunter's journal for September 1841 claims the comfortable four-roomed verandah cottage was by then let for an inn at 300 pounds a year. [2] In July 1847 Watson warns from 'Flemington', that cattle running on the Keillor Run would be immediately impounded if not removed.[3] Later that year he advertised in the *Port Phillip Patriot* a sale on 7 December of livestock, along with the right to Keillor Station, taking place at his residence, 'Flemington', 4 miles from Melbourne on Salt Water River. His office was then in Little Collins St.

Despite overlanding to Port Phillip in 1839 with substantial backing and taking up vast tracts of high country land surrounding and encompassing what is now Lake Eildon, with other properties at Geelong and Portland, the end of the land boom and failing agricultural fortunes of the young colony brought the firm to insolvency and the litigants to their feet. Figures given by Alexander Hunter in September 1841 show that Watson and Hunter employed 100 hands, had about 80 horses, 3000 cattle and 20,000 sheep, constantly changing. They had 12 stations at Devils River, 'buying and selling Melbourne properties daily'.[4] Watson was to name one of these high country properties 'Rose Bank', which seemed to irritate the young Hunters. As early as 1841 both John Hunter and Watson suggested to young Alexander Hunter that he ask his father to send a paid manager for the estates as they had lost everything by being involved in the firm. By July 1842, J. M. Darlot was appointed as trustee and receiver. The high country properties were sold in 1846. It took until April 1847 for Darlot to end the work of receivership. Creditors were paid 2/9 in the pound, and Watson was then free to commence business again. He began advertising as a stock and station agent in the *Port Phillip Gazette* of May 1847.

Edward William Jeffreys, 1817-1845
Mia Mammalook, station of Messrs. Hunter, Devil's River
La Trobe Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria

Watson was an early member of the Melbourne Club and had stayed there awaiting the arrival of his bride to be, Elizabeth Rose, second daughter of James Rose, Esq., late of Flemington Estate, Morayshire, Scotland. Elizabeth arrived on the *Midlothian* on 12 December 1840 and they were married on 31st at the Heidelberg residence of John Hawdon. Watson's address on the marriage certificate was given as Keillor.

Earlier in 1840 he had bought with his own funds, then sold part of 960 acres in the County of Bourke, Parish of Keelbundora, naming it 'Rosanna'. One lot included a house, later rented by Judge Walpole Willis, who was to be the first judge in the lengthy series of court cases involving Watson and Hunter. Willis later passed judgment on the ownership of 'his' residence which prejudiced his own tenancy. This house was possibly the home first used by Watson and Elizabeth and burnt down in the 1920s. [5]

The fondness for names relating to the Rose family of 'Flemington', Morayshire, may have been partially due to financial support, but young Alexander Hunter reports home that this isn't so, or that it was not Elizabeth's money Watson was using.

There are frustrating discrepancies in published details of Watson's origins but the one supported somewhat by his death certificate, is that he was related in some way to Hugh Watson of 'Keillor', one of three farms long run by the Watson family, on the Belmont Estate south of Meigle in what was then Fyfe. There is a plethora of Hugh and James Watsons in the family and several of them married daughters of the Rose families.

Hugh Watson of 'Keillor' was a renowned breeder of black Angus cattle, establishing his prizewinning herd as soon as he took over the lease in 1808 aged 21. A portrait of him and an illustration of 'Keillor Steading' can be seen in a 1958 publication held by the State Library of Victoria.[6]

James Watson was born c1811 and in his early twenties left Scotland to run property in Canada. On his return to Scotland he was invited by Alexander Hunter to become a partner and to manage Watson and Hunter at Port Phillip.[7] The term 'factor', as used in Scotland, would probably best describe what was expected of him; to carry on the business; to supervise and oversee all of the estates of the owners. Professor Michael Moss is convinced that Watson was a factor, as the Kennedys sent their own factors, Craig and Gairdner, to Melbourne to sort out early problems with the finances of the company.[8]

The young Hunter brothers were openly disparaging of Watson in their journals. He couldn't mend harness. He preferred comfortable accommodation to a camp. He was disgusted by a breakfast of fly-blown beef, with no knives or plates, which was served up at Holland's near Devil's River, during one of his visits to the high country properties. In 1840 while living at Mrs Hamilton's for 28 shillings a week, Watson has an office at Craig's where he attempts to mend a bridle and offends Mrs Craig by tipping her servants.[9]

Known as 'Brindled Jamie', perhaps relating to a greying auburn mane, Watson was a horse fancier and he raced Countess, and John Hunter raced Romeo at the first Melbourne race meeting in April 1841. In January 1847 *The Argus* reported a raffle for 'the splendid thoroughbred horse Sir Walter', by Rory O'More of Mr Greene, in which Mr Watson of Keilor and Mr Barnes 'each threw 42'. Mr Barnes purchased Watson's chance on the following day for forty guineas. On the day before the sale of Flemington Estate, Watson sold livestock and implements of husbandry at 'Flemington'. The highlights of the livestock sale were 10 named horses, one of which was his Maggie, the six year old grey mare who 'everybody knows'.

Very little has been written of Elizabeth, but she died on 12 May 1847, her death certificate showing wife of settler, 'Flemington', Salt Water River. She had given birth to Maggie, Elizabeth and James, the latter buried beside her in the Old Melbourne Cemetery 17 months later. Her will, leaving all of her estate to James and his heirs, was witnessed by Isabella and Charles Laing, from whose offices her funeral departed. Two weeks

after her death Watson placed an advertisement in the *Port Phillip Gazette* claiming that circumstances lead him to becoming an agent in Melbourne, with offices in Glass's Chambers, cnr. Elizabeth and Little Collins streets. He was living at 'Flemington', where cattle could be consigned to him.

This residence, 'Flemington', preceded the Flemington Estate as Watson purchased the estate blocks on the Moonee Ponds in December 1847, and his earlier residence was on the Salt Water River. It was probably on the 4293 acres, running along the Salt Water River, for which he purchased licenses to occupy; Doutta Galla portions 7-11 and 13, and sections 17 and 18. He paid 62 pounds for the licences at an auction on 25 June 1845. The Port Phillip Gazette of 28 June states that at the sale of Crown Lands on the same day as the licences auction, 'the public were not to be gulled, not a single bid was made' for lots in the County of Bourke.

Returning to the auction of Flemington Estate, a portion sold for 20 pound an acre. The lot on which Watson's house was erected sold for 600 pounds. In November 1849, Hugh Glass purchased Flemington Estate for £4,100 pounds, *The Argus* calling it one of the finest suburban properties in Port Phillip. Glass had associated with Watson on various occasions during the years, visiting the high country properties and participating in droves. Flemington Estate became the setting for his 'Travencore'. Paul Fox writes of William Ferguson who 'gardened Glass's Flemington House estate as if it were different parts of the globe, grouping the plants he imported according to aspect, soil and climate'.[10]

It appears Watson remained somewhere on the estate until at least 1850 when a daughter Anne was born. Watson had married widow Anne Hawker at Collingwood in June 1848, a year after Elizabeth's death. By 1851 they had moved from Flemington to Cardigan St, North Melbourne where two children died in that year.

The sale of the estate could well have been brought on as a result of the notice which appeared in *The Argus* on 14 April 1848, calling to a special meeting all creditors in the estate of James Watson of Melbourne, settler, at the offices of Robert William Pohlman, Chief Commissioner of Insolvent Estates. However, Watson seemed to feel invincible as at Government land sales on 8 November 1849 he purchased Melbourne town lots 2, 3 and 4 for a total of 561 pounds, *The Argus* remarking that the buyers were 'of a class evidently well to do in the world'. Hugh Glass purchased lots 5 and 6 for 371 pounds.

Watson had corresponded with La Trobe in July 1848 and November 1849 about the ownership of his 'Taggerty' run, a huge property comprising of extremely difficult country, 'completely in the ranges', which was almost lying alongside the high country runs since sold. He had previously told Lands Commissioner Grimes that the property was bounded by the Acheron River and a stream, which he chose to call the Taggerty.[11] He wrote to La Trobe changing lease details on the property from Watson and Cameron to Henry Johnson, who also purchased the stock.

In 1851 Supreme Court judge William A'Beckett made a judgment on the long running case, now known as Marchioness of Bute and Others v. Mason and Others. In the years since the case started many of the litigants had died and descendants were carrying on the battle. During previous court findings, the original one of fraud concerning a deed of assignment between James Watson and John Hunter, and Henry Ward Mason, another defendant, had been turned around to allow for the liabilities and debts of the estate, which were on behalf of the plaintiffs, with a finding that the deed was valid. The case had been all the way to Privy Council. Watson's name was then effectively cleared of the fraud charge, but there was little left of the vast enterprise after 10 years of court battles. John Hunter had died in Geelong in 1846. In January 1851 the estate of James Watson, 'late of Flemington', was hit by compulsory sequestration.[12]

Watson died 10 May 1869 aged 57 of cancer of the tongue. He was living with Anne at Fitzroy St, Fitzroy and left a large family in need of support. He had lost what may have been the goal for which he had been striving, the Flemington Estate, built in the style of Scottish estates, an almost self-contained village with shops and an inn both serving the estate and bringing in revenue. Watson, maintaining that dream of the life of a gentleman, had managed to build up Flemington Estate despite the long weary years of the trial of Watson and Hunter.

The way he was seen by the society of Melbourne may have been different. Georgiana McCrae, whose friendship could be a litmus test for an upper strata of society, did not mention Watson in her journals, though she entertained the Hunters on several occasions, and visited Mrs 'Ailsa' Craig, who was related to the visiting Kennedy factor. Andrew Murison McCrae's legal firm was involved in early litigation cases concerning Watson and Hunter. It may of course just have been that it was not until 1851 that Mr Justice A'Beckett's finding lifted the blemish of fraud from him. Whatever else befell James Watson, the most cruel may have been losing the 'Esq.' after his name.

Endnotes

1. The Argus, 4 August 1848, p.2.
2. Hunter Family, Papers, 1839-1843, MS 7790-7814, Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria.
3. The Argus, 27 July 1847.
4. Hunter Papers.
5. Donald S. Garden, Heidelberg: the land and its people, 1838-1900, (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1972).
6. James R. Barclay, and Alexander Keith, The Aberdeen Angus Breed: a history, (Aberdeen: The Aberdeen-Angus Cattle Society, 1958).
7. E. Robertson, Papers, 1964, MS 7676, Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria.
8. Michael Moss, The Magnificent Castle of Culzean and the Kennedy Family, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002).
9. Hunter Family, Papers.
10. Paul Fox, 'Keeping Aridity at Bay: acclimatisation and settler imagination in nineteenth century Australia', Australian Humanities Review, July 2005, p.3.
11. Pastoral Run Files, VPRS 5920, P. R. O. V.
12. The Argus, 29 January 1851, p.2.

Charles Joseph La Trobe: Journeys and Excursions in Australia

Compiled by Dr Dianne Reilly

1840

14-19 February: Geelong, Corio, Barwon Mission Station, Point Henry, Point Lonsdale

16-18 March: Yering

25 July-1 August: Dandenong, Western Port

30 August- 3 September: Arthur's Seat, Cape Schanck, Point Nepean

25-28 October: Mt Macedon, Tallarook, Kilmore

23-24 November: Station Peak

1841

2-4, 27-30 January: Geelong, Indented Head, Shortland's Bluff (Queenscliff), Cape Schanck, Western Port

13-25 May: Portland

2-6 July: Barwon Mission Station, Geelong

25-30 September: Campaspe, Kilmore

26 October: Geelong

23 November-9 December: Holiday at Williamstown

1842

16-20 January: Geelong, Colac, Weatherboard, Station Peak

21-24 July: Goulburn, Kilmore, Mitchellstonen, Mount Macedon

17-20 October: Geelong, Shortland's Bluff

31 October-5 November: Loddon District, Mt Alexander

1843

27-February-11 March: Port Fairy, Portland, Stoney Rises, Mt Rouse, Grampians

17-20 April: Geelong and the Heads

11-16 August: Point Nepean, Western Port

19-25 December: Loddon District

1844

18-22 January: Geelong

3-9, 17-23 February: Geelong and the Heads

10 April: Dandenong

30 April-15 May: Geelong, Colac, Port Fairy, Portland, Mt Gambier, Merino Downs, The Grange, Mt Rouse, The Elephant

6-9 August: Geelong

17-22 October: Geelong

9-22 November: Cheviot Hills, Kilmore, Grampians, Mt William

10-13 December: Geelong

1845

14-22 January: Geelong and The Heads

28 February-14 March: Gippsland-Dandenong to Wilson's Promontory

15-19 March: Geelong and The Heads

3-17 May: Port Fairy, Portland, Warrnambool

24-28 June: Geelong

7-13 October: Geelong, 1st attempt to reach Cape Otway, Timboon, Terang

1-4 November: Cape Schanck, Arthur's Seat

3-9 December: Geelong, 2nd attempt to reach Cape Otway, Port Campbell

1846

26-29 January: Geelong

22-29 February: Geelong and The Heads

27 March-12 April: Geelong, Cape Otway, Lubras' Cove

17-20 April: Geelong and The Heads

12-13 July: Dandenong

28 July-3 August: Buntingdale Mission Station

24 August-6 October: Twofold Bay, Eden, Sydney

9 October: To Van Diemen's Land

Visits to: Launceston, Norfolk Plain, Deloraine, Avoca, Tallegroim, Fingal, Falmouth, Tasman's Peninsula, Eaglehawk Neck, Cascades, Port Arthur, Hobart, D'Entrecasteau Channel, Recherche Bay, Huon, Bruny Island, Fluted Cape, Maria Island, Schouten Island, Mt Wellington

1847

24 February: Return to Port Phillip

10-14 June: Geelong

3 July: Dandenong

16-24 July: Mt Rouse

10-15 September: Geelong

26 November-3 December: Gippsland

11-16 December: Geelong, Trawallo, Pentland Hills, Bacchus Marsh, Kellor

1848

10-12 January: Mt Macedon District

31-January-2 February: Geelong

10-23 March: The Grampians, Portland, Port Fairy, Warrnambool

14-17 April: Geelong

22-25 August: Geelong

26-30 September: Mt Macedon, Mt Aitken, Kellor,

1-4 December: Geelong

1849

20 January-5 February: Geelong, Cape Otway, Warrnambool, Portland, Trawallo, Bacchus Marsh

2-25 May: Geelong

29-31 August: Dandenong

17-24 October: Loddon Station, Mt Macedon, Kyneton

23-29 November: The Heads and Geelong

20-23 December: Mt Macedon District

1850

12-13 January: Geelong

17 January-1 February: Murray River, Swan Hill, Terrick Terrick, Seymour, Kilmore

20-22 February: Dandenong

8-19 March: The Grampians, Horsham, Buninyong, Ballan, Bacchus Marsh

20 April-5 June: Geelong and The Heads

29 July-1 August: Mt Macedon

9-11 October: Geelong, The Heads

24-29 October: Dandenong, Cape Schanck, Arthur's Seat

30 November-7 December: Mt Macedon, Goulburn River

1851

9-11 January: Plenty Ranges, Yering

22-26 February: Twofold Bay, Sydney

12-18 April: Brownlow Hill, Kiama, Wollongong, Sydney

3-10 May: Return to Melbourne

2-5 September: Geelong

2-8 October: Buninyong, Ballarat, Geelong – 1st visit to goldfields

22-28 October: Mt Alexander, Forest Creek, Kyneton

1852

19-23 February: Yering

13 April-5 May: Bacchus Marsh, Ballarat, Buninyong, Clunes, Castlemaine, Kyneton, Mt Alexander, Bendigo, Avenel, Benalla, Wangaratta, May Day Hills, Seymour

19-27 November: Bacchus Marsh, Ballarat, Creswick, Mt Alexander, Bendigo

16-23 December: Carlsruhe, Shortland's Bluff, Point Lonsdale, Mordialloc

1853

18-15 February: The Heads

18-21 March: Yering

2-5 April: Geelong

15 April-2 May: Bacchus Marsh, Ballarat, Creswick, Ballarat, Kerang, Bendigo, Kilmore, Broad Meadows

20-21 September: Geelong

28 October-1 November: Shortland's Bluff, Capel Sound

26-30 November: Capel Sound, Arthur's Seat

1854

21-23 January: Yering

28-31 January: Geelong

17-21 February: Capel Sound

6 March: Yan Yean, Mt Disappointment

A Word from the President

This edition is the last issue of La Trobeana for the year. As always, it is full of interest for all who have curiosity in Victoria's colonial era in general, and about Charles Joseph La Trobe in particular. I am sure you will enjoy it

The Society's last function for 2009 is the traditional 'Christmas Cocktails', to be held on Friday 11 December at the Athenaeum Club in Collins Street, Melbourne. This year, we will be kindly hosted by member John Adams. Guest speaker will be the current La Trobe Society Fellow, Dr Helen MacDonald. I trust you will all be able to come.

The Season's greetings!

Rodney Davidson
President

A Word from the Treasurer

One of the La Trobe Society's successes is the endowment of a Fellowship each year. This Fellowship is administered on behalf of the Society by the State Library of Victoria, and is given for the study of the colonial period of Victoria's history during Charles Joseph La Trobe's administration as Superintendent and Lieutenant-Governor (1839-54).

Three Fellowships have been presented to date through the generosity of sponsors convinced of the educative role of the La Trobe Society. The first one, in 2007, was courtesy of our President, Rodney Davidson, who sponsored Dr Frances Thiele's project for a book on La Trobe's relationship with the Aboriginal people.

The second Fellowship, awarded to Dr Wayne Caldow in 2008 through the kind auspices of the Shoppee Family, was for study and published articles relating to the early exploration of Gippsland.

The third and current Fellow is Dr Helen MacDonald whose biography of Melbourne's first Mayor, Henry Condell, is sponsored by esteemed historian and former President of the La Trobe Society Professor A G L Shaw.

Sponsorship is needed for the 2010 Fellowship. A tax deductible donation of $25,000 will secure a six-months' project for a Fellow working full-time, or part-time for a year.

I am about to send all members a letter outlining the details of the Fellowship, in the hope that next year's funding may be achieved. A 'Limited Edition' bronze bust by renowned sculptor Peter Corlett is presented to each year's sponsor, and this is illustrated in the letter.

Should you be able to help keep this worthwhile project on track, or if you are able to suggest a philanthropic source, I would be grateful to hear from you.

John Drury
Hon Treasurer

Friends of La Trobe's Cottage

170th Anniversary of the arrival in Melbourne on 3rd October, 1839, of Charles Joseph La Trobe as Superintendent of the Port Phillip District.

FOLTC Garden Sub-Committee Convenor Sandi Pullman with Beverley Joyce

The window cleaner, aka La Trobe Society Treasurer, admires her work!

Victorian Re-Enactment Group, with "Mr La Trobe' reading his address to the citizens of Port Phillip

Max Joffe fixing the flagpole, with advice from John Drury

Peter Corlett and John Drury wash down the servants' quarters

The Friends of La Trobe's Cottage have been active, since their first meeting in April, in working with the National Trust to improve the appearance of the Cottage, and to raise public awareness of La Trobe and his role in the development of early Melbourne.

Garden and House Working Bees have been held – the garden has been tidied, and fertilised. At a House Maintenance Working Bee on Saturday 5 September, the Cottage was cleaned inside and out and some minor repairs made.

On Saturday 3 October, the 170th Anniversary of the arrival in Melbourne of Charles Joseph La Trobe was celebrated. His official arrival, which had been delayed by bad weather from 30 September, was re-enacted. He was escorted, with his wife Sophie, to the Cottage precinct by Captain Lonsdale, and was greeted there by John Pascoe Fawkner, who encouraged the crowd to welcome their new superintendent with enthusiasm. His commission was read, and he responded with his proclamation to the citizens of Port Phillip. The flag was raised and National Anthem played. Many members had volunteered to help with set-up, catering and managing the day and the group received much support from the National Trust in planning for, and funding, the event.

Dr Dianne Reilly and Professor Miles Lewis gave most informative presentations at two Information Sessions which formed part of the Anniversary celebrations. These were held at the East Melbourne Library and enabled the Friends and others to learn more about La Trobe and his Cottage.

The Cottage is now open to the public every Sunday between 2.00 - 4.00 pm from October to May. Members who are also current National Trust Guides have supported this and are providing guided tours of the Cottage. Entry is free to Friends, La Trobe Society and National Trust members.

The group now hopes to continue to work with the National Trust to develop the Cottage and the area immediately surrounding it. Urgent tasks include repair of the roof, and replacement of the fence. The National Trust was recently awarded $60,000 in Federal funding for urgent house repairs and interpretative signage, and we hope to be involved in the carrying out of these works.

Helen Botham

Chair, FOLTC

NOTICES

Christmas Cocktails

Christmas Cocktails for 2009 will be hosted by Society member Mr John Adams.

Date: Friday 11 December.

Time: 6.30 - 8.30 pm.

Venue: The Athenaeum Club, 87 Collins Street, Melbourne.

Guest Speaker: Dr Helen MacDonald, La Trobe Society Fellow for 2009.

Topic: Henry Condell, First Mayor of Melbourne.

Cost: $65.

RSVP 6 December

Dianne Reilly
Hon Secretary
Telephone: 9646 2112

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 at

http://www.latrobesociety.org.au/LaTrobeanaIndex.html.

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"Qui la cèrca, la tròba"