

# LA TROBEANA



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## La Trobeana

Journal of the C J La Trobe Society Inc.  
Vol. 9, No. 1, February 2010

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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 I.I.: 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

Miles Lewis's important article entitled 'Jolimont in Context' begins this issue. It recalls the stimulating lecture Professor Lewis gave to the C. J. La Trobe Society on 13 October, 2009. He brings to us his unique knowledge, garnered over a long period, of the prefabrication of portable housing generally, of its construction (and destruction) in the Port Phillip District, and to the 'philosophy and practice of conservation in the twentieth and twentieth-first centuries'. Many interesting pictures from the lecture, some from Miles Lewis's own collection, have been reproduced for this issue.

The title of Miles Lewis's article may well serve as a theme for this February issue because it reminds us that the property that housed Charles Joseph and Sophie La Trobe's family was a centre for others, too, the staff who worked or lived there. The accoutrements for their survival in this new world, and for instruction and creativity are explored in various articles. Jennifer Bantow's ongoing research into two families associated with the property provides us with some clues to their identities and by implication the ways in which the La Trobe household operated. The description, by an unknown curator, of the sampler of Charlotte Pellet's daughter evokes for us, not only the role that religion played in such a household, but provides a glimpse of an experience of childhood played out on the frontier which historians, I consider, might more often research. John Dwyer explores in meticulous detail the contents

of La Trobe's medicine chest, an object of considerable heritage significance. His research enables us to know about the medicines and treatments of the nineteenth century, and provides an insight, perhaps, into the hopes and the fears that accompanied those who dared to come so far from home.

Dr Helen McDonald's research, as our La Trobe Society Fellow, into Melbourne's first mayor, Henry Condell, moves us into the wider context of Melbourne society. Her lecture on 11 December, 2009, enthralled us with her findings, thus far, and reminds us of the harsh realities of local politics facing a high-minded and cultured person such as La Trobe. We have included John Adams' welcoming address to that lecture as it draws us into an even wider context again, by making some interesting comparisons with Charles Darwin.

Sophie and Charles Joseph La Trobe's Huguenot ancestry is also brought to our attention by the inclusion of the notice of the publication of *The Hidden Thread: Huguenot families in Australia*. Thus, we can add a little more to our understanding of the world of Jolimont.

**Loreen Chambers**

Editor

# JOLIMONT IN CONTEXT

By Miles Lewis

We tend to see La Trobe's Cottage through a haze of sentimentality, as our iconic first government house, small, simple, and chastely white - reflecting those heroic and pristine early days of the Port Phillip District. My purpose is not to debunk that image, but to expand and enrich it. I want to consider how the property and the house relate to earlier buildings, especially Lonsdale's Cottage; to other putative government houses, to the history of prefabrication in general; to the old and the new sites; to the history of building technology; and to the philosophy and practice of conservation in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

The romantic haze with which the Jolimont estate is shrouded includes the story that it was Madame La Trobe who first exclaimed 'Quel joli mont!', There is also the true story of how the colonists declined to bid against La Trobe for the site, references to the house as a Swiss chalet, and the quite unsupportable claim that it was the first government house, And even now we pretend that the mock-up structure that exists is the real building. But despite all this the real story is an interesting one, and the remaining authentic components of the structure are significant in their own right.

Three earlier buildings in Victoria have been or could be referred to - more correctly - as 'government house'. The first was the tent occupied by Lieutenant-Governor David Collins at the Sorrento settlement of 1803-4, about which we have no useful information. The second, which was actually called 'Government House', was that occupied by Captain Wright at the Westernport settlement of 1826-8. The site has been excavated by the Victoria Archaeological Survey in modern times. The third was Lonsdale's cottage, to which I will return shortly.



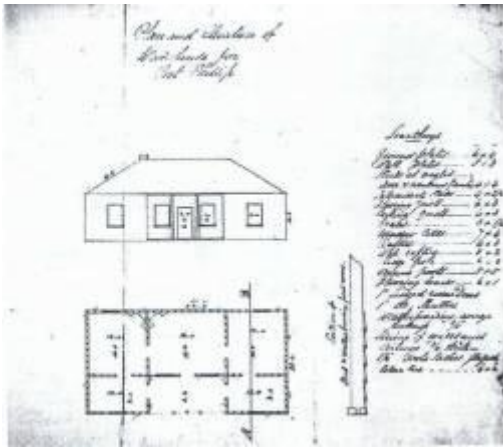
**Fig. 1** Map of the settlement at Westernport Bay 1826-8, Public Record Office, London, with the wording interpreted, from an illustration in P J F Coultts, *Report on Archaeological Investigations at the 1826 Settlement Site - Corinella* [Records of the Victorian Archaeological Survey, Number 18], Melbourne 1985, p 3 which is a redrawn version of a plan in the National Archives, UK: 'Western Port March 1827 by R. Hovell. MPG 1/594', reproduced by permission of Heritage Victoria: Government House to the right.

Each one of these was constructed at government expense for the commandant of lieutenant-governor, was regarded as the seat of administration, and was truly a government house. Jolimont, on the other hand, was not owned or built by the government, and was La Trobe's private property, He had an office in central Melbourne and that was referred to at times as Government House. The oldest surviving Government House is Toorak House, which was occupied by La Trobe's immediate successor, Charles Hotham (and is now the Swedish Church, Toorak). But it was originally built as a private house and designed by a private architect (probably James Blackburn senior, despite a furphy that it was designed by Samuel Jackson).

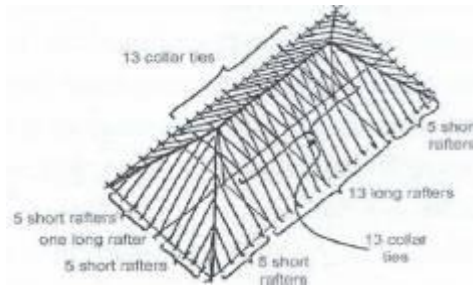
Of all these buildings it is Lonsdale's cottage which most truly relates to La Trobe's. Lonsdale was humbler in rank, but he was La Trobe's predecessor as the administrator of the settlement. As La Trobe was to do, Lonsdale brought a prefabricated house. As La Trobe was to do, he settled to the east of the town at what became known as Jolimont. And in more modern times the National Trust acquired Lonsdale's cottage, just as it had acquired La Trobe's. The Trust planned to



**Fig. 3a** George O'Brien (attrib.) *Lonsdale's Cottage*, c. 1850, with the disparate roof slopes marked, La Trobe Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria, H3847.



**Fig. 2** Royal Engineers, Sydney, *Drawing for Lonsdale's Cottage*, 1836. Archives Office of State Records, New South Wales, NRS 12859,2/8477.



**Fig. 3b** Reconstruction of the intended roof frame, based upon the way bill of stores. Miles Lewis.

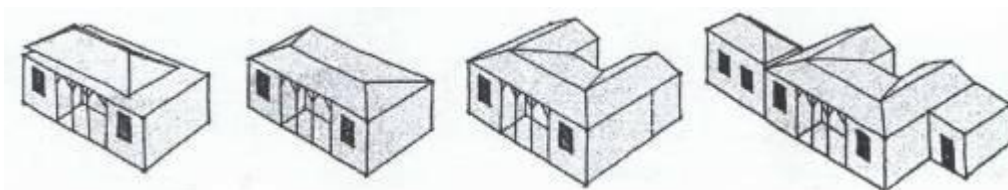
rebuild both buildings together on the Domain, which would have been appropriate enough, though it never eventuated.

Australia generally, and the Port Phillip District [Victoria] in particular were prime markets for prefabrication. There are many reasons for prefabrication, but the most relevant ones are that building timber was largely imported and that labour costs were much cheaper in Britain than in Australia. However, the same economic considerations might apply to make prefabrication an option *within and between* the Australian colonies. By 1804 houses were being made in Parramatta and sent

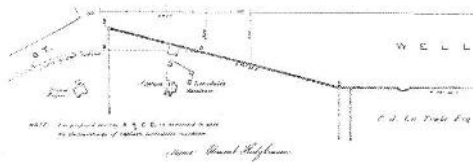
to Newcastle.<sup>1</sup> In 1836 the Royal Engineers at Sydney made a house for Captain William Lonsdale to take to Melbourne.

In 1837 it was dispatched to Melbourne on the Schooner *Isabella*, with the larger components carried on deck. Unfortunately storms were encountered and some of this material was jettisoned, and had to be replaced with new timber in Melbourne.

But that was not the worst of it. There was a problem in putting it up, which can be discerned from the contemporary view attributed to George O'Brien. The roof appears strangely skew, and that is not the fault of the artist. Due an extraordinary error in Sydney the roof was too small for the cottage, and it had to be extended backwards. The 'Way Bill of Stores' which



**Fig. 4** *Lonsdale's Cottage* (a) as supplied, with the roof too small; (b) as built with a skew roof; (c) as extended during Lonsdale's occupation; (d) with additions between 1853 and 1891, Miles Lewis.



**Fig. 5** Surveyor Clement Hodgkinson's scheme 'to save the outbuildings of Captain Lonsdale's residence', c. 1853., Winston Burchett, *East Melbourne* (Melbourne 1978), p 6. Public Record Office Victoria.

accompanied the cottage, lists all the components, and the sizes of some of these were written in after it reached Melbourne. From this information I have been able to reconstruct the intended roof frame.<sup>2</sup> During its period at Jolimont the cottage was added to by Lonsdale himself and by subsequent occupants, until its removal in 1891.

The cottage was under threat even before Lonsdale left the colony. In March 1853 the Melbourne City Council determined to continue Wellington Parade at its full five chain [100 m] width through to Spring Street. The angled line shown here is a counter-proposal designed to save Lonsdale's buildings. Lonsdale left the colony in July 1854, while the matter was undecided, but in the event the road widening did proceed and the outbuildings were demolished. However the road alignment was still slightly angled, apparently to save the house itself. The cottage was now occupied by one Morton, an instructor in military engineering to the

Volunteers, and it continued to be inhabited by public servants for many years.

The cottage finally had to make way for the Jolimont Railway Yards in 1891, when it was sold for removal. It was bought by A M Alexander and put up as a beach house in Carrum. There it was rediscovered by David Saunders in 1959 and was recovered by the National Trust.

Now there began a tragic saga, In 1959 the cottage was removed from Carrum, but some timbers fell off the trailer, and it was re-erected in John Holland's builder's yard incorporating some replacement timber, When nothing was done with it Hollands lost patience, and in 1962 the cottage was dismantled and stored under iron sheets at Como, In 1973 it was discovered that elements of it had been used by the National Trust Junior Group in its Moomba float, and two doors had been used on the Como lavatories, An inventory was now taken. Not only was much missing, but parts of other buildings such as McCrae's Cottage had been added to the pile. The material was now put into commercial storage for greater security, but when space became available in the stables at 'Glenfern' it was moved there. Here another inventory was taken n 1985, with the result that only one window head and two sills could be confidently identified as belonging to



**Fig. 6** Charles Rudd, *First Government House in Victoria*; a relic of the early days of Melbourne - Lonsdale's Cottage, prepared for removal, 1891, photograph, La Trobe Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria, H25802.



Fig. 7 Unknown photographer, Lonsdale's Cottage at Carrum, c. 1950, Royal Historical Society of Victoria.

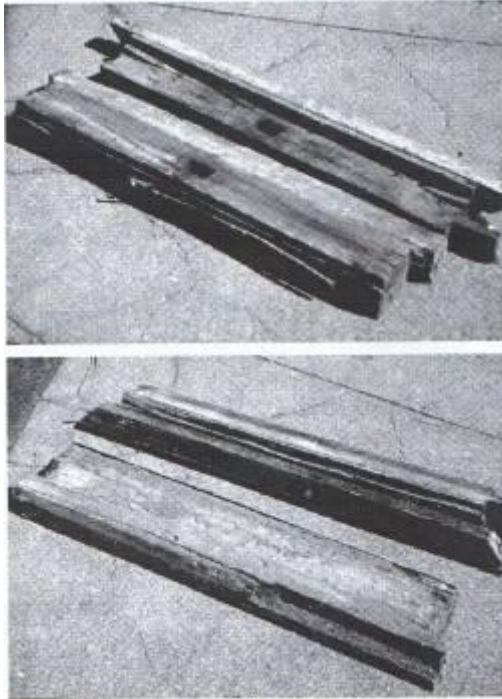


Fig. 8 The identifiable remains of Lonsdale's Cottage at 'Glenfern', 1985, Miles Lewis.

the cottage. The National Trust had destroyed its own A classified building.

Lonsdale's and La Trobe's cottages are linked by more than history, function and location, but by the fact that both were prefabricated. The reasons for this are important. Until the 1830s there were no real systems of prefabrication. Traditional timber frames could be taken apart and put together again, so that a building made by any carpenter could be dismantled and transported without great difficulty. But by the 1830s British makers of timber houses, such as S W Brooke, began to develop their own specialised and sometimes patented systems, rather than relying upon traditional carpentry.<sup>3</sup>

Peter Thompson of London was an exceptional case. He made small, emigrants' cottages<sup>4</sup> but he also made big houses for important people, such as Chief Justice Martin's house at Judges Bay, Auckland, New Zealand<sup>5</sup>. 'Woodlands', near Tullamarine, is one of his larger houses which survives in altered form. Thompson also enjoyed a modest career as an art forger, acted as an amateur architect, was a pioneer in the use of concrete construction, and built experimentally in hollow terra cotta block.

Henry Manning was even more prominent than Thompson, and rather more sensible. He was a builder who began by making the house intended for Napoleon at St Helena, and later one for his son to take to the Swan River settlement (Perth), Western Australia. Manning made other houses for Western Australia, as well as for the eastern colonies and for New Zealand, where he was responsible for the first Government House.<sup>6</sup> He was in fact the preferred supplier of colonial governors, judges and members of the establishment, so it was natural that La Trobe should go to him.

His advertisement in the *South Australian Record* gives the flavour:

H. MANNING, 251, HIGH-HOLBORN, London, manufacturer on the most simple and approved principles, pack in a small compass, may be erected with windows, doors, and locks, painted inside and outside, floors, &c. complete for habitations in a few hours after landing. price £15. and upwards. They may be taken to pieces and removed as often as the convenience of the settler may require.

H.M. made those now occupied in the colony, by the Rev. C.B. Howard, J. B. Hack, esq. and others from whom testimonials have recently been received of the superiority of those over all others ....<sup>7</sup>



But Manning had done something else as well. For shooting lodges, cottages and temporary structures he had devised the first true panelised system, a form of total pre-cutting in which there were three basic wall elements, a solid panel, a window panel and a door.

These fitted into grooved square posts - there were posts with one groove, with two at opposite sides, with two in adjoining sides, with three, and with four. With these elements, as well as standardised roof and floor elements, you could build a structure of any size and plan you wished,

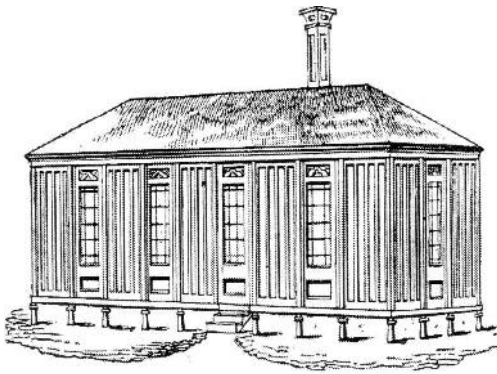


Fig. 9 J C Loudon, *An Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture*, London, 1846 [1833], Manning's system, 256.

A number of Manning buildings survive in whole or in part, mostly in South Australia, and one of the best is at Ringmer Road, Burnside,

But for precise information on the Manning system a Victorian building is more important. Samuel Vaughan, who emigrated to Melbourne in 1852, brought a 'rough house' and a panelled house from Manning, and listed the components in his journal in meticulous detail. He also transcribed the instructions for erecting the house, and with all this information it is possible to reconstruct it in considerable detail.

And the house survives, more or less. It was built in South Yarra in 1853, but in about 1860 was moved to 78 Mercer Street, Queenscliff. Externally it is unrecognisable, but internally the panelised system is clearly visible.

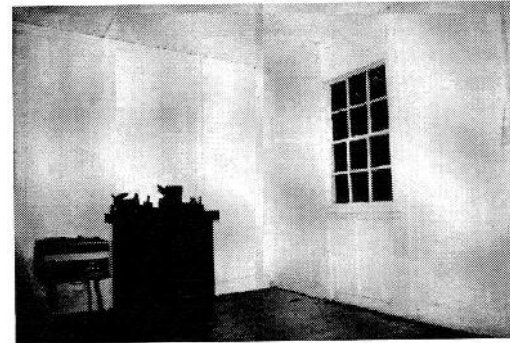
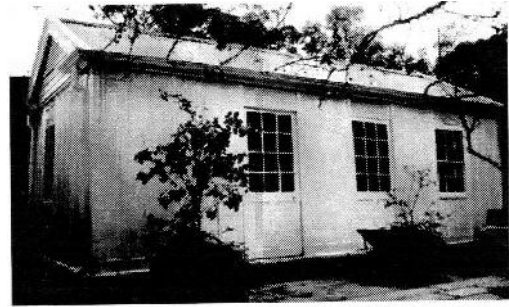


Fig. 10 Manning cottage at Ringmer Road, Burnside, South Australia, Miles Lewis.

Vaughan's use of two Manning houses is also relevant to La Trobe, who recorded:

I planned a small panelled cottage capable of being easily put together which was to be prepared to be shipped off without delay direct to P. P. with tents and a variety of stores such as I was instructed by my advisers to be indispensable or convenient. The plan of the framework and fittings of a more substantial and permanent cottage was also decided upon and the work put in hand, to be completed and forwarded to the colony as soon as might be after my departure ...<sup>8</sup>

He had ordered from Manning not only a house which was suited to his status, but which would take some time to make, but also a panelised cottage which he could take out immediately, use temporarily, and then sell. At least that was the idea.

On his arrival in October La Trobe made immediate arrangements to put up what he called 'my portable

cottage and whatever offices were indispensably necessary' on government land. Though he might be forced to move from this in due course, the cost of buying land in Melbourne was so great that he was anxious to stay if possible. In fact he had so little hope of being able to buy a site of his own that he initiated arrangements to dispose of his permanent house even before it arrived. 9



**Fig. 11** Samuel Bradford Vaughan, *Shipboard diary* written on board the 'Medway' on a voyage from London to Melbourne, 11 November, 1852 - 4 April, 1853. Notes at the back include ... details of the goods brought with him including 2 portable houses. 'Particulars of Packages of wooden house as they are marked + numbered', La Trobe Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria, MS8628, MS9869.

In the event, however, he managed to buy the site upon which his cottage was built. His 12½ acre [5 ha] site was the first offered for sale at the auction of 10 June 1840, and John Pascoe Fawkner stood up and appealed to the crowd not to bid against him. One man, George Harper, attempted to put in a bid at the last minute, but was 'instantly silenced with shouting, groaning, yelling, bonneting, kicking and cuffing', and the land was knocked down to La Trobe at the reserve price of £250. It was actually worth about \$6250, or twenty-five times as much. In Sydney Governor Gipps was worried about this, but ultimately the sale was allowed to stand.

Thus when La Trobe's larger house arrived, somewhat belatedly, he did not have to sell it, and instead put up at the north-east corner of his estate, and let it out from early 1841. It was sold in 1869 to John Sharp, the timber merchant, who occupied it for a few years. In 1877 the materials of the house were advertised for

sale, and the architect James Gull called tenders for Sharp's new house on the site, 'Inveresk', which still stands at 2 Jolimont Terrace.



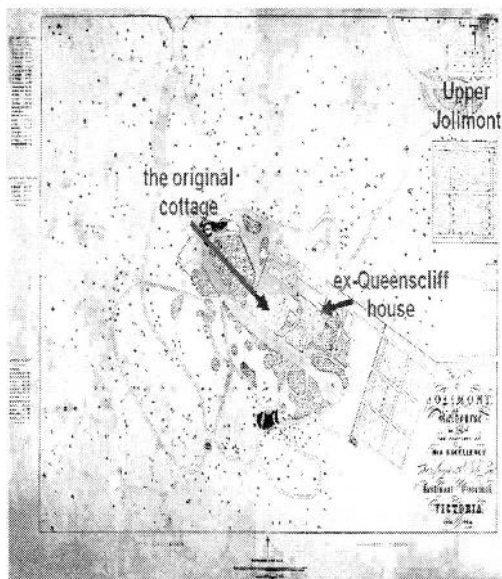
**Fig. 12** Anonymous photographer, *Upper Jolimont*. In 1871. Telecom Australia Neg. No. VH 481/2.

Thus the site contained firstly La Trobe's cottage proper, a Manning panelised house put up in 1839, but with a dining room added at one end by a local builder, possibly George Beaver. This was to be massively extended with rooms behind, mostly, it seems, between 1845 and 1850. Secondly there was what had originally been intended as La Trobe's house, 'Upper Jolimont', at the north-east corner of the property. Linked with the main cottage after 1848 was another which La Trobe had put up as a holiday house at Shortlands Bluff [Queenscliff] in 1844-5, but had moved to Jolimont. It is referred to as the detached cottage or the sleeping quarters.

The sketches of La Trobe's cousin, Edward La Trobe Bateman, give us our first detailed knowledge of the buildings. Bateman was an artist, garden designer, semi-architect, and in a high camp sort of way a true exponent of the picturesque philosophy. His pencil sketches of Jolimont are well-known, but it is not clear whether he contributed to the design of the buildings or the garden which they depict. The probability is that he did work on both.

Although we should not forget that La Trobe was himself a cultivated man and an exponent of the Picturesque, the factitious tree trunks used for the verandah columns of the detached cottage (which it is unlikely to have had when at Shortlands Bluff) are

squarely in a tradition begun by John Nash, and seem likely to be Bateman's. La Trobe himself showed these columns in two sketches of October 1853.<sup>10</sup> This suggests that they may well have been new additions, and if anything supports an attribution to Bateman. The fact that similar columns appear about this time in the officers' quarters at the Government Camp, Ballarat,<sup>11</sup> suggests the influence of La Trobe and/or Bateman, for a bleaker sensibility prevailed in the public works of the Hotham and post-Hotham years.



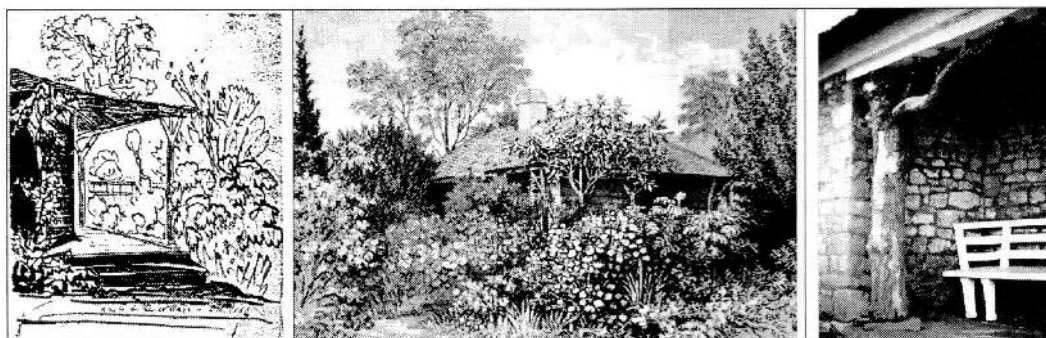
**Fig. 13** Richard Counsel, surveyor, *Map of Jolimont Melbourne. Containing Twelve Acres Three Roods. The property of His Excellency Chas. Joseph La Trobe Esqr. Lieutenant Governor, Victoria 1840, 1853, La Trobe Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria, H18199.*

Bateman's sketch of the larger rockery shows, probably rather inaccurately, a section of fencing, too lightweight to be timber, especially as the end standard appears to be double. It is almost certainly an iron fence, a significant element of garden design at the time, and

would have been imported from Britain. Examples of the sort survive at 'Woolmers', Tasmania, and 'The Heights', Geelong.

Bateman's sketch of the water shed at Jolimont includes a water cart, which may have had a special interest for the artist. Water was distributed in the town in water carts, or large barrels on wheels, which in some cases were simply driven into the river and filled by baling, but normally were filled by pumps along the bank. Unfortunately, when the river was low and the tides were high, brackish water would rise above the line of reef at the Falls, and would be drawn up by the pumps instead of the more healthful supply which came down from the tanneries and fellmongeries of Richmond and South Yarra. So just about the time of Bateman's sketch work was begun upon a reticulated water supply.

While the Yan Yean reservoir was being constructed the Melbourne Water Works began laying water pipes in the streets, and connected them to a reservoir on Eastern Hill, the site of the present Eye and Ear Hospital. This was temporarily supplied with Yarra water by a steam pumping engine to the west of Jolimont near Lonsdale's house. Plates bearing the Melbourne Water Works name necessarily date from about 1855-9, not long after E L Bateman's sketch. But some bear the name of his father, John Frederick Bateman, who was the leading hydraulic engineer in Britain, responsible for projects like the Manchester water supply and, largely, the Loch Katrine supply for Glasgow.



**Fig. 14** Left: Charles Joseph La Trobe, *Angle of the Cottage – Oct. 1853, National Trust of Victoria.* Centre: Edward La Trobe Bateman, *The detached cottage, Jolimont, c.1852-54, pencil and Chinese white on brown paper, La Trobe Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria, H98. 135/3.* Right: *Oak Cottage, Blaise Hamlet, near Bristol. Designed by John Nash, photograph, Miles Lewis.*



Fig.15 Stopcock cover, formerly at 8-10 Napier Street, Fitzroy, photograph Miles Lewis.

La Trobe departed for England on 6 May 1854, and he was so meanly treated by the British government that he remained, until his death in 1875, largely dependent upon the income derived from the letting and sale of his Jolimont property.

His colonial representatives were F A Powlett, O C McArthur and W H Hart,<sup>12</sup> and it fell to them to extract the income he needed.<sup>13</sup> At first the cottage and Upper Jolimont were both let to the Government and occupied by various military figures, but subdivision began in 1855, creating first Agnes Street and then in due course the rest of Jolimont as we now know it. An early sketch is on Bank of Australasia letterhead

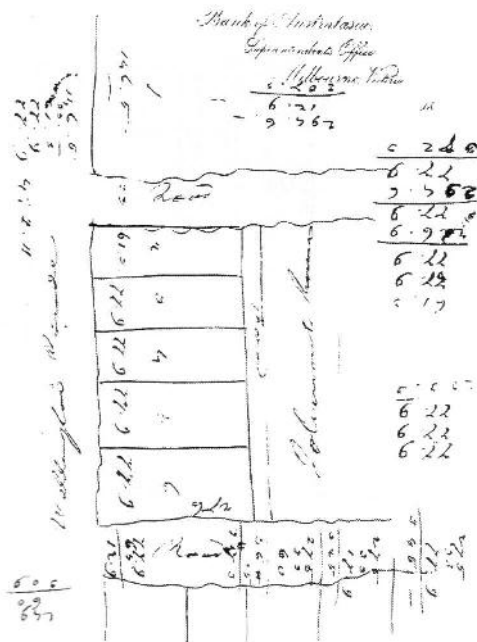


Fig. 16 Sketch plan of subdivision by D C McArthur of part of the Jolimont estate, c. 1857, Graham La Trobe Papers LS2/30/5 box 2, University of Melbourne Archives, Graham Bros. and Co. collection (6 /14).

and is clearly by McArthur, who was Superintendent of the bank.

Blocks were being sold from about 1857, and a major purchaser was James Palmer (whose land was by 1859 bounded by Wellington Parade, Charles, Palmer and Agnes Streets). The estate later had to buy back part of Palmer's land to create Charles Street.

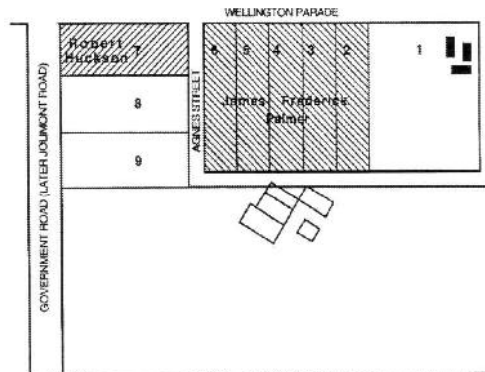


Fig. 17 Reconstruction of the 1857 plan of the Jolimont estate. Miles Lewis.

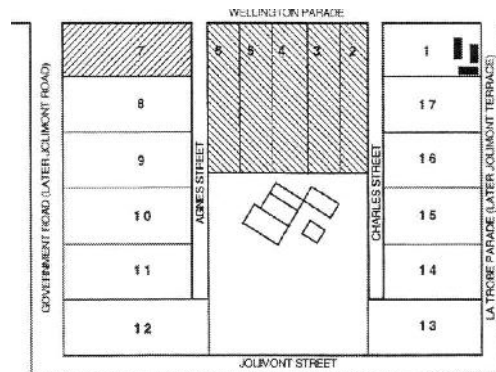


Fig. 18 Reconstruction of the 1863-4 plan of the Jolimont estate. Miles Lewis.

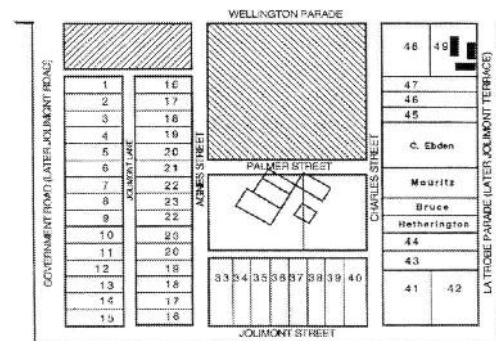
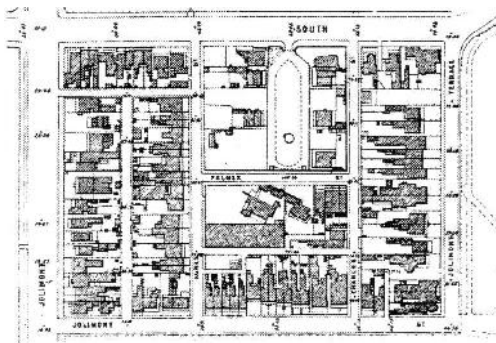


Fig. 19 Reconstruction of the 1865-71 plan of the Jolimont estate. Miles Lewis.

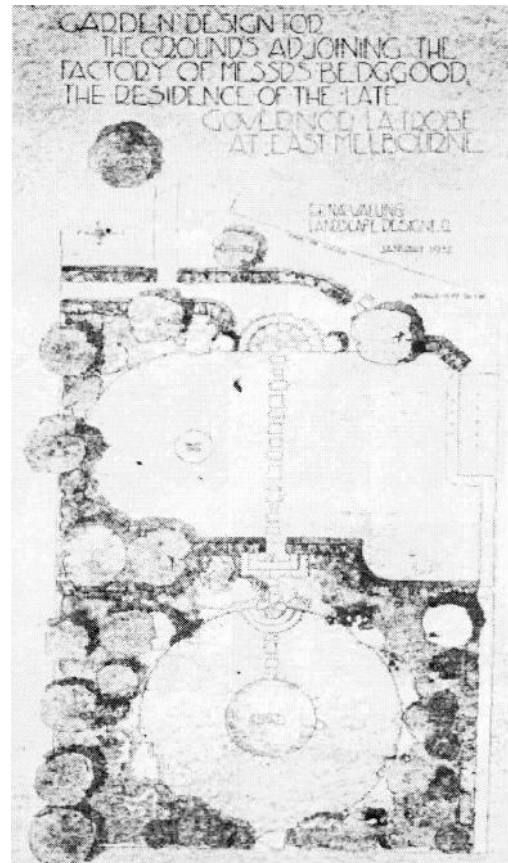
The cottage property was subdivided into two in 1866, but in the event James Lupton bought both lots and there was no immediate effect upon the buildings. The creation of Palmer Street had a more immediate effect. Both houses survived as private dwellings and then boarding houses, but in 1886 the western property was bought by the Fenton brothers, chinaware importers, who immediately built a three storey brick warehouse. This was sold in 1899 to J C R Bedggood, and became the Bedggood shoe factory.

For a time the Bedggoods kept the house as a caretaker's dwelling. In 1914 the Melbourne *Argus* reported that the 'first government house' at Jolimont was about to be demolished,<sup>14</sup> but the accompanying illustration showed what appears to be part of the detached cottage, which was now on a separate property, and it is not clear that the house itself was threatened,



**Fig. 20** Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works, Plan no 27 East Melbourne M/387(27) copyrighted 14.1.95; litho LE 19.9.94; ReP March 1898 no 50, detail.

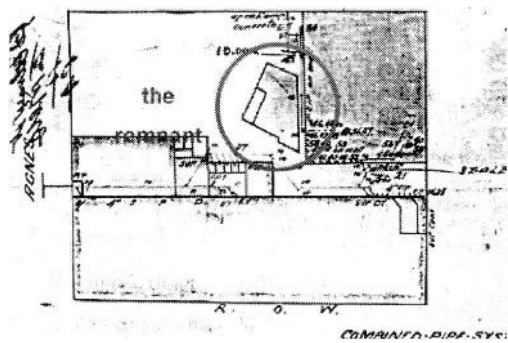
In fact in 1931 the Bedggoods commissioned a garden design from Edna Walling, and in 1932 opened the house to the public. But this may have been as much a diversionary tactic as a philanthropic exercise, for it established the public approach to the cottage from the west, and in 1937 they demolished almost the whole of the panelled cottage to make way for a new building to the east. Only the dining room and a corner of the panelled building survived. There may have been a lot of Edna Walling, but there was now very little of La Trobe, and almost nothing of Manning. Alec Petrie's photograph, of about 1943, shows the



**Fig. 21** Edna Walling, Garden design for the grounds adjoining the factory of Messrs Bedggood, the residence of the late Governor La Trobe at East Melbourne, January 1932, La Trobe Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria, H97. 270/1 09



**Fig. 22** Alec Petrie, View of the house from the west c. 1943, photograph, National Trust of Australia (Victoria) file F196.



**Fig. 23** Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Drainage Plan No 24795, c. 1945-6, with the remnant of the Cottage indicated.

dining room, with the Walling garden in front, but one can barely discern behind a tree to the left the high building which has replaced most of the cottage.

The National Trust began to take an interest in the cottage in 1956, but came to no decision until in 1958 it received an ultimatum from E L Bedggood that the building must go. Lengthy negotiations with the State Government and Melbourne City Council ensued in an effort to find the site until in March 1963 Bedggood imposed a firm deadline of three months, and the removal actually took place in July.



**Fig. 24** Unsourced photograph of the Cottage from above, c. 1950s, in the possession of Miles Lewis.

There was so little of the original building remaining, and it was in such poor condition, that it would have been easier to scrap it and build a complete replica. The Trust's experts at first proposed to do just this, incorporating only the few 'worthwhile' elements of the surviving structure. But the Trust's honorary architects, John & Phyllis Murphy, were more sensitive to the importance of authenticity than most of their colleagues at that time, and were at pains to preserve as much as possible, which amounted to the dining room and two wall panels of the prefabricated building. Nevertheless the recreation was based upon very limited research by university students and others, and no knowledge whatever of Henry Manning. It used much voluntary but inexpert labour and donated materials which were less than ideal.

The site upon which it was constructed, close to the National Herbarium, was thought to be topographically similar to that at Jolimont. But about 1996 the Trust unaccountably succumbed to pressure (based on

purely commercial considerations) from the Royal Botanic Gardens to move it again, to the present site.



**Fig. 25** *La Trobe's Cottage: perspective reconstruction as in ?1840, University of Melbourne, Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning, Architecture slide 6993.*



**Fig. 26** *The National Trust Junior Group working on La Trobe's Cottage, July 1963. Courtesy Nada Brazel.*



**Fig. 27** *The National Trust Junior Group painting the Cottage, 1963, University of Melbourne, Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning, Architecture slide.*



**Fig. 28** *Base of the dining room wall, La Trobe's Cottage, showing the wall plate and the bases of the studs, photograph, Miles Lewis.*

One would imagine that this largely destroyed, replicated and twice moved structure would have little to offer the scholar. But remarkably enough the

exposure of part of the dining room wall structure revealed that the framing, apparently original to the work of 1839-40 attributed to the Melbourne builder George Beaver, was of world importance. It was an early example of the light industrialised framing techniques which characterise the Australian 'stud frame' and the American 'balloon frame'. It is in fact the oldest identified example of this type in the world.

## Endnotes

- 1 *Sydney Gazette*, 1 April 1804, refers to 'the frame of a house ... morticed, tennanted [sic] and ready for putting up' prepared at Parramatta for construction at Newcastle.
- 2 There was a ridge board of 18 ft 6 in x 8 in x 2 in [5.640 x 203 x 51], and four hip rafters each of 14 ft 4 in x 8 in x 2 in [4.370 x 203 x 51], indicating a hipped roof. At a reasonable pitch for shingles the rafters would project to 12 ft 10 in [3.910] in plan and give overall dimensions of 36 ft 10 in x 18 ft 4 in [11.230 x 5.590].
- 3 *Builder*, (London), I, 15 (21 May 1843), p 178.
- 4 [John Stephens], *The Land of Promise* (London 1839), advertisements. See also his semi-detached cottages: *Builder*, I, 6 (18 March 1843), p 70
- 5 John Stacpoole, *Colonial Architecture in New Zealand* (Wellington 1976 [actually 1977]), p 26.
- 6 It was described as being made by the firm which supplied Napoleon's house at St Helena, which was in fact Manning. It is illustrated in John Stacpoole, *William Mason, the First New Zealand Architect* (Auckland 1971), P 33, and John Stacpoole, *Colonial Architecture in New Zealand* (Wellington 1976 [actually 1977]), pp 24-5.
- 7 *South Australian Record*, 3, 27 November 1837, p 1.
- 8 *Trust Newsletter*, no 1 (June 1959).
- 9 La Trobe correspondence 19 October 1839, Dixon Collection, SLV, quoted in Susan Adams's Liardet notes.

- 10 'Oct. 23. 1853. End of cottage Madde's room' and' angle of the cottage - Oct. 1853'; La Trobe watercolours nos 33, 34.
- 11 The elevation by H B Lane of the Colonial Architect's Department is reproduced in Weston Bate, *Lucky City: the first generation at Ballarat, 1851-1891* (Melbourne 1878).
- 12 Editor's footnote: James Graham was the executor of the will.
- 13 Miles Lewis, *La Trobe's Cottage: a Conservation Analysis* (Melbourne 1994), p 48.
- 14 *Argus*, 24 March 1914, p 7.

# Welcome to The La Trobe Society at the Athenaeum Club, 11 December, 2009

By John Adams'

When Dianne Reilly asked me to say a few words of welcome to the La Trobe Society I thought back to when I joined the National Trust of Victoria in the early seventies. I visited all the usual places, Como, Rippon Lea but also La Trobe's Cottage. I didn't really know that much about the man apart from what I had learnt at school.

My interest in Charles Joseph La Trobe was rekindled when I was doing some research on a property we owned in Central Victoria. He travelled to the district in 1844 and I believe visited the property; it was one of the 94 trips he made around his constituency during his time in office. This in itself was an extraordinary effort, and the more I found out about La Trobe, the more I realised he was a man of many occupations and indeed a man of the world.

It seems to be that the nineteenth century produced a number of such people and, as this is the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin, perhaps a comparison is appropriate to illustrate the point.

- La Trobe was born in 1801, Darwin in 1809. They were both christened Charles.
- As young men, they travelled extensively. Amongst other places, La Trobe to North America, Mexico and Australia Darwin to South America and Australia.
- They were authors, botanists, geologists, collectors of plants, insects and seeds. They were also very religious. They were men of many interests and interesting men. One of the things about La Trobe that was a revelation to me was his talent as an artist. In the latest edition of *La Trobeana* there is a sketch of La Trobe standing on his galloping horse drawing one of the beautiful vistas

he saw on his travels. Darwin rode over the Blue Mountains to Bathurst.

- They both contributed on the world stage. Darwin with the publication of *The Origin of Species*, La Trobe in the establishment of Melbourne and being the first colonial Lieutenant-Governor of Victoria. They both had many setbacks, health problems and challenges. In the case of La Trobe, when Melbourne's population swelled from 15000 to 80000 in six months with the gold rush, he struggled to cope from the humble cottage in which he lived. Darwin on the other hand struggled with his conscience as to whether to publish or not, in Down House.
- But there were many people in the nineteenth century who made significant worldwide contributions and who would become members of the Clubs that would actively seek them. Darwin became a member of the London Athenaeum Club in 1838, a year before La Trobe came to Australia.
- La Trobe became a member of the Melbourne Club in 1844. (Our Melbourne Athenaeum Club was established in 1868). La Trobe was elected to membership of the Athenaeum Club in Pall Mall, London on 27 March, 1855
- La Trobe died in 1875 aged 74 years and Darwin in 1882 aged 73 years.
- La Trobe and Darwin were men of many talents and interests who were welcomed into their Clubs and it is such people who are still welcomed today into the Ladies' and Gentlemen's Clubs that we have here in Melbourne and indeed around the world.

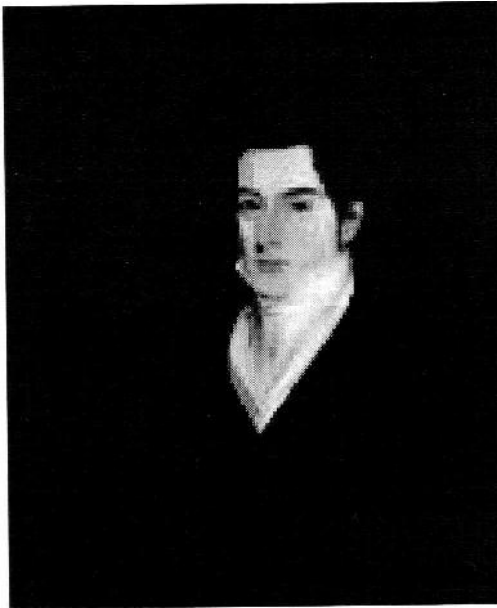
It is therefore my pleasure and honour to welcome the La Trobe Society to the Melbourne Athenaeum Club for its Annual Christmas Celebration.



# HENRY CON DELL: MELBOURNE'S FIRST MAYOR

By Dr Helen MacDonald

*Helen McDonald is currently the La Trobe Society Fellow at the State Library of Victoria and a senior fellow in the School of Historical Studies at the University of Melbourne. Her first book *Human Remains* won the Victorian Premier's Literary Award (History) and a new book, *Possessing the Dead* will be published early in 2010. Helen also writes for journals, literary and science magazines and newspapers. She is a member of the La Trobe Society and of the Advisory Board of The Writing Centre for Scholars and Researchers at the University of Melbourne.*



*Henry Condell: First Mayor of Melbourne. 1842-1844. [ca. 1830-ca. 1840]. La Trobe Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria.*

I first came across Henry Condell in the State Library of Tasmania, while I was researching my first book, *Human Remains*. The reference to him appeared in an intriguing newspaper article published in 1835 which reported that a serious miscarriage of justice had occurred during a coroner's inquest. The newspaper's

editor intended to report the case, in detail, to the British Secretary of State for the Colonies, as it was an example of how poorly justice was administered in Lieutenant Governor George Arthur's Van Diemen's Land.

When I read this I had no time to devote to tracking that story down, but it intrigued me. So I typed the report up and filed it away for future investigation. Since then, I've learned considerably more. The woman whose death had been the subject of that coronial inquest had been a convict in the service of Henry Condell, a brewer in Hobart Town. According to a dying declaration she made he had been the assailant. However, at the inquest this important document was not produced. A few months later Condell was charged with assault rather than manslaughter or murder, and convicted of that in a Quarter Sessions court in 1836.

We next encounter him six years later, dressed in a scarlet robe, parading through Melbourne's unmade streets, on his way to be inducted as the town's first mayor.

My research as this year's La Trobe Society Fellow is to learn how this came to be - how a man with *this* past became an alderman and mayor in December 1842 and, in the following year, to be elected to the New South Wales Legislative Council to represent the town of Melbourne in that important forum. And I'm investigating this in the understanding that it will tell us a Port Phillip story that is larger than that of one man's time here. All of which is to say that I'm engaged in the kind of cold-case detective work that historians love.

At the moment Henry Condell is no more than a marginal figure in Australian history. His presence in the past is generally confined to two dramatic moments. The first is that parade through the streets on 10 December 1842, most accounts of which have been taken from reporter Garryowen's mocking version of the event. It is replete with a joker heading the parade followed by the town band, then the new councillors marching with arms linked, two by two, followed by Henry Condell dressed in a Masonic robe. This is a colourful story: municipal politics cast as farce. The second dramatic moment took place the following year during the vicious sectarian contest surrounding the first partially elected NSW Legislative Council. Condell ran as the Presbyterian candidate to represent Melbourne against Roman Catholic Edward Curr - a man who was much better qualified for the job. During this open election, Condell's beer flowed liberally in the tent he had pitched outside the polling place. When the result was declared in his favour, enraged Irishmen caused such havoc in the town that troops were called out and the Riot Act read before people dispersed.

My quest is to find a fuller account of Henry Condell's activities - and those of his family - than these two moments give us. There is a large back-story to discover in Edinburgh, on the Portuguese island of Madeira, in New Brunswick (Canada) and in Calcutta. Condell lived in each of these places before he arrived in Van Diemen's Land, for he was a man of his times and this was the British colonial world. People circulated through it - colonial governors, administrators, military men - and also those whom they governed. It makes the examination of one man's life and times transnational in scope. As historian Cassandra Pybus has written, in a world like this one, closely examining a life 'in grainy detail can confound what we historians like to think we know about the past' as we seek to discover an individual's experience 'in the push and pull of historical forces'.<sup>1</sup>

When Henry Condell arrived in Hobart Town in 1822 he had already tried his hand at clerical positions in India

and British North America without much success. In that year, he married Marion Vallange in Edinburgh and, just a month later, left her behind there while he set sail for Hobart Town. She would not follow for another three years. A thorough search of the Colonial Secretary's correspondence books during Condell's 17-year residence in Van Diemen's Land reveals that he was the kind of man who caused trouble to those around him - in his working life, his neighbourhood and his home. On obtaining his land grant his first act had been to erect a fence across it in such a way that the road leading to his neighbours' properties was from that time closed to them. As for Condell's workplaces, prior to becoming a brewer he was successively a clerk and storekeeper in various government offices - the Ordnance Department, the Engineers Department, then the Commissariat Department. Eventually, in 1829, Lieutenant-Governor Arthur dismissed him from his post for gross insubordination. And in his home life, Condell had continual trouble with his servants, culminating in that assault against a 46-year old woman who had angered him by entering the parlour and asking - rudely, he thought - for some bread. A fortnight later, she was dead.

Condell's behaviour where he worked and lived tells us something of the man's character. And it adds to the puzzle of how he came to be viewed as the best candidate for the positions he held in Port Phillip, where he and his family arrived in 1839, a month after Charles and Sophie La Trobe. The years Condell spent here hold the key to understanding how he reinvented himself as a respectable man in the British colonial world. And he did this despite the fact that news of the scandal surrounding that woman's death in Hobart Town threatened to derail his career on certain occasions. It was, after all, known to other colonists arriving in Port Phillip from Van Diemen's Land. They brought it with them, as part of their cultural baggage when they crossed Bass Strait.

So far, in my fine-grained reading of this man's life, there has been no single Eureka! moment that suddenly

makes everything clear, but that just redoubles my efforts. Interestingly, Condell seemingly emerged from nowhere, politically speaking, as a candidate for that first Town Council election. During his preceding three years in Melbourne he had not been actively involved in any of the civil and political causes that occupied other men at the time - those who had large dreams for the District's and Melbourne's future, Condell brewed his beer in the Lonsdale Street brewery he had built while they agitated for separation from New South Wales, promoted immigration schemes, planned how children should be educated and raised subscriptions to establish charitable institutions here. He did not share in the work of converting civil and political aspirations into reality during those years. Instead, he focused on the grinding, mashing, sparging, boiling, cooling, fermenting and cleaning through which barley was processed into beer.

This political disengagement was noted by newspapers after Condell was elected to the Town Council. As the *Port Phillip Herald* reported on 9 June 1843, his connection with 'public and political matters is wholly unknown, while his education and trade are both inferior and confined - he possesses no oratorical powers, has hardly a decent address, no knowledge of his duties, is one easily led, and wholly untried in the services expected at his hands',

Nor had Condell joined in the work of establishing and attending Melbourne's cultural institutions, such as the Mechanics Institute and the Debating Society. You would be hard pressed to find anyone who differed in so many respects, from the cultured new Superintendent, Charles La Trobe. Soon after he had arrived in Melbourne a month prior to Condell, La Trobe wrote home to lament that it was a place in which the 'arts and sciences [were] unborn' - then went on to do something about that.<sup>2</sup> In contrast, as George Cavanagh bitinglly wrote in the *Port Phillip Herald* of Condell on 27 June 1843: 'Converse with him, and you see a man without education - listen to him speaking, and you hear a man who commits solecisms in sense and grammar painful to repeat'. And

Cavanagh went on to question whose interests Henry Condell, who was ill-qualified for the positions he held, might serve.

This assessment was one-sided but Cavanagh was right to question Condell's interests, for much had been hoped of Melbourne's first Council. As George Arden, the editor of the *Port Phillip Gazette* articulated it on 26 November 1843,

'The quality of our first Corporation will affect the character, the influence, the progress, and well-being of Melbourne, to an extent which it is impossible to estimate. The moral power of a responsible and high-minded Town Council truly representing the wishes of the people, and the advantageous position of Melbourne would be very great'.

As the key to understanding Condell's rise to prominence did not lie in the political or cultural realm, so I next turned to examining this man's working life, and so the business of brewing. This unlocks the puzzle of why he ran for that first Council election for private, rather than public reasons. For while the Town Corporation's powers would be limited in certain areas (most contentiously, it would have no control over the police) the Councillors would have extensive power to intervene in other areas in which a brewer was intimately interested. The Incorporation Act had granted the Council responsibility over most urban functions, including water supply, sanitation, markets and lighting. It was responsible, too, for street construction and maintenance. And to accomplish these public works the Council was empowered to rate all buildings and receive market dues. It could also enact bye-laws - so long as these did not contradict colonial laws.

As Henry Condell well knew from family experience, a Town Council might also gain the power to intervene in his business in other ways. Condell's grandfather had been a brewer in Edinburgh and Condell himself had brewed beer in Hobart Town for nine years. He knew that in

Scotland the burghs gained revenue from brewing in the form of local taxes; and they also exerted control over the quality and the sale of beer. Then there was the matter of a town's water supply. In Van Diemen's Land, Condell had built his brewery beside a rivulet that provided it with plentiful and free quantities of pure water. But at the time he left there water was increasingly coming under government control, being viewed as a public rather than a private good. Melbourne's inadequate water provision was of great interest to brewers at this time. Condell's livelihood depended on its quantity, quality and cost. As a contemporary brewing manual highlighted, 'To procure water suitable for brewing is an object of the greatest importance, both with respect to the flavour of the ale, and to the quantity of extract to be obtained from the malt'.<sup>3</sup>

Condell would also have been keen to ensure that barley (the agricultural product that was his primary resource) together with beer (his end manufactured product) were not harshly taxed, and that the roads over which these products travelled were both built and maintained. k, things stood at that time, Melbourne's roadways could hardly have been in worse condition. As one tongue-in-cheek newspaper advertisement proclaimed: 'THE STREETS - Wanted immediately one thousand pairs of stilts for the purpose of enabling the inhabitants of Melbourne to carry on their usual avocations'.<sup>4</sup>

Finally, having unexpectedly been elected mayor by his fellow Councillors served Condell's interests well in another way. In holding that position he also became the chief magistrate of the town and this gave him a say in granting, renewing or refusing to renew publicans' licences, as well as dealing from the police court bench with such matters as public drunkenness.

So, in the conducive environment of the State Library, I'm learning a great deal about Melbourne during these pre-gold rush days, working my way out from the raw biographical details of Henry Condell's life to see where that takes me. k, well as brewing, so far it

has led me to examine such important aspects of the Port Phillip District as various emigration schemes and the determination to keep convicted felons from the District. Condell's daughter, Jane - who had been left behind in Edinburgh as a child - suddenly arrived in Melbourne in 1841, aged 18, under the controversial bounty emigration scheme even though her father was well able to have paid for her passage here.

Another aspect of the Condell story is leading me to delve into his record as a magistrate by examining the many cases he judged between 1842 and 1853. Then there is the fraught relationship that developed between the Town Council and Superintendent La Trobe; relations of employment in the District (for Henry Condell continued to bring his recalcitrant servants before the courts); and there are more mysteries to solve, not least why Condell suddenly left Victoria during the early gold rush years when he might have increased his fortune massively had he stayed.

All of which will tell us something rich about both this man and his thoroughly interesting times, in a new book I'm writing that, together with earlier histories, will make a new contribution to our understanding of the past.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Cassandra Pybus (2008), 'The Old Commodore : A Transnational Life' in Desley Deacon, Penny Russell and Angela Woollacott (eds), *Transnational Lives: Australian Lives in the World*, ANU E-Press, Canberra, p. 16, p. 3.
- <sup>2</sup> La Trobe to Murray, 15 December 1840, in L.J. Blake (1975, ed.), *Letters of Charles Joseph La Trobe*, Government of Victoria, Melbourne, p. 11.
- <sup>3</sup> Cited in Ian Donachie (1979), *A History of the Brewing Industry in Scotland*, John Donald Publishers, Edinburgh, p. 105.
- <sup>4</sup> 'Garryowen' (1888), *The Chronicles of Early Melbourne, 1835 to 1852*. Historical, Anecdotal and Personal, Vol. 1, Fergusson

# C. J. La Trobe's Medicine Chest

By Dr John Dwyer Q.C.

*After retiring from the Victorian Bar following some 36 years of practice, John Dwyer took up the study of horticulture at Burnley. He completed a PhD by thesis 'Weeds in Victorian Landscapes'. One aspect of his research investigated the medicinal uses of many weeds. He has a longstanding interest in heritage conservation, and was on the council of the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) for 15 years. John is currently Chairman of the Australian Garden History Society.*

Charles Joseph La Trobe, who came to Melbourne as Superintendent of the Port Phillip District in 1839, and became Lieutenant-Governor of Victoria in 1851, was a complex and interesting man. There is much about him as a well-rounded citizen of the world that we find attractive, although he was not in some respects a popular figure while in office. Although powerless to prevent the tragic consequences of aboriginal dispossession, he made a significant contribution to the community, as Dianne Reilly Drury has shown in her detailed study *La Trobe: the making of a governor* (2006). His legacy to Victoria includes locating the Royal



Medicine Chest of C J La Trobe, c1838, photograph, *La Trobe's Cottage*, National Trust of Australia (Victoria).

Botanic Gardens at the present site, reservation of land for the University of the Melbourne and the State Library of Victoria, locating Parliament House on the high ground opposite Bourke Street, making provision of land for churches, establishing utilities such as the Yan Yean reservoir, and reserving parkland outside the city grid. In 1853 he engaged Ferdinand von Mueller, who was to become perhaps the greatest scientist in 19th century Australia, as Government Botanist. His house, preserved (or perhaps recreated) for the people of Victoria by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) and now located on the Domain enables us to enter in imagination into his way of life.

Among the relics of La Trobe included in the National Trust's collections is his Medicine Chest. Before he left in 1854 to return to England, La Trobe gave his Medicine Chest to Mr McCallum, whose great-granddaughter, Miss E. Orbell-Jones, presented it to the National Trust in 1962. The Chest is an object of heritage significance simply for its association with this important figure from our past. Carefully considered, however, it has the potential to tell us a great deal about La Trobe and his time, about ways in which life in the Port Phillip District in the 1840s and in 1850s Victoria after separation from New South Wales were different from life today. How did La Trobe and others in colonial Victoria deal with illness? What medicines were available to them, and how were they used?

It was not unusual for early residents of the young colony to bring a case of drugs and medicines with them from England. For example, Georgiana McCrae, who became a close friend of the La Trobe family, brought a Medicine Chest with her on the *Argyle* when she sailed to Melbourne in 1840-1. It seems likely that

La Trobe's Chest arrived here in the same way, as part of his equipment for life as a colonial governor. As La Trobe embarked on the *Fergusson* in March 1839, his Chest may be dated to about 1838.

A plate once fitted to the inner surface of the lid of the La Trobe Chest reads 'Savory & Moore, Chemists to the Queen, 143 New Bond Street and 220 Regent St. London'. Thus the plate must have been made after Queen Victoria's accession to the throne in 1837. Savory & Moore, established by Thomas Field Savory in 1794, opened its Regent Street premises in 1826, according to an essay in *The Pharmaceutical Journal* Vol. 279 (2007) The firm became heavily involved in the Medicine Chest business. This included both the compilation and sale of stocked Chests, and also the sale of books such as John Savory's *Companion to the Medicine Chest* (1836), later expanded to *A Compendium of Domestic Medicine and Companion to the Medicine Chest (The Compendium)*. The professed purpose of the Savory publications was to provide: 'A source of easy and prompt reference for clergymen, master mariners, and travelers; and for families resident at a distance from professional assistance.' They may also have been intended to promote the sale of Medicine Chests, as the 1856 edition included descriptions of 59 different models, and the following encomium was included in the 1878 edition:

'The advantages offered by the possession of a well-arranged Medicine Chest are so great that they can scarcely be over rated. In many instances, as in districts of the country remote from medical aid, a Medicine Chest is often the means of saving life, or of cutting short a dangerous and otherwise fatal illness.'

The La Trobe Chest may be viewed in the context of the history of Medicine Chests. Anne Mortimer Young's monograph *Antique Medicine Chests* (1994) considered British 18th and 19th century domestic medicine chests in the light of their history and evolution. Early chests have been found in shipwrecks,

including the Tudor ship *Mary Rose* which went down in 1545. Young writes that:

'It was not until the end of the 18th century that medicine chests for the home became popular in Britain. Then at the turn of the century, they proliferated and became almost mass-produced. The contents of the chests faithfully reflect the orthodox medical approach of the early 19th century, the time of "heroic" medicine.'

The La Trobe Chest is a surviving example of this once extensive class.

### The Contents of the La Trobe Chest

The contents to be found now in the La Trobe Chest are not, however, those which he brought out in 1839. At some time in the first half of the 20th century, many years after La Trobe had left Melbourne in 1854, the original contents of the La Trobe Chest were replaced by more modern preparations. This conclusion is based on two matters. First, nearly all of the labels on the phials currently to be found in the chest are those of B.P. Dartnell, Chemist, 392 Clarendon Street, South Melbourne. Dartnell owned the pharmacy from about 1903 until his death in 1955, so his labels indicate re-stocking during this period. Secondly, some of the medicines in the phials had not yet been developed and were not in use while the chest was in La Trobe's possession.

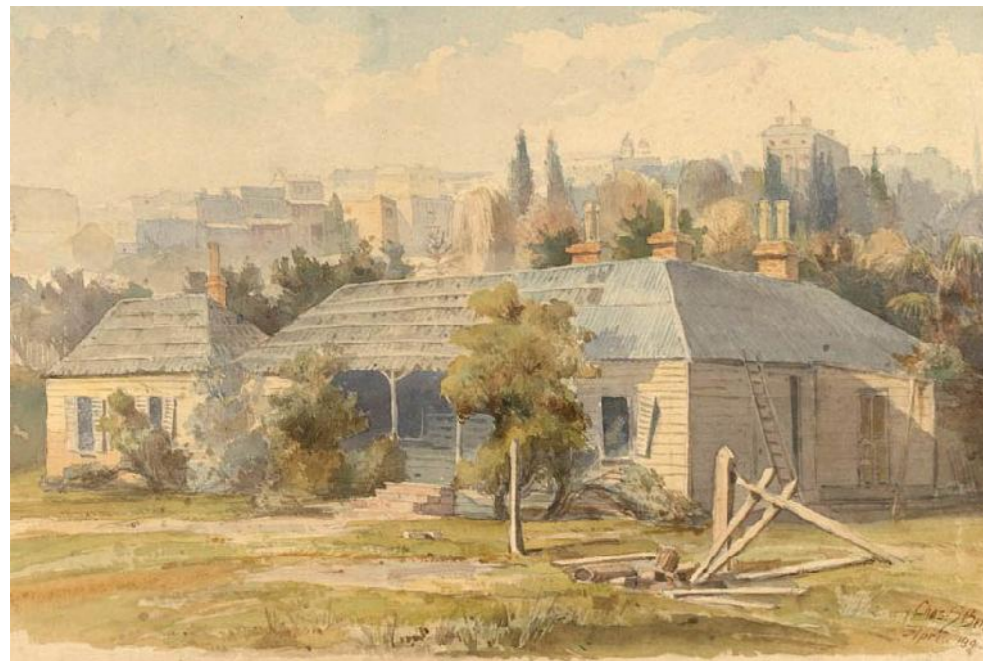
Let us consider a few examples of these later, or post La Trobe, medicines:

### 'Listerine (Mouthwash)'

Listerine was first formulated in 1879 as a surgical antiseptic, and became popular as a mouthwash in the 1920s. It is still in use today, although the dental



Sarah Susanna Bunbury, Mr La Trobe's House Jolimont July 1st 1842, ink, pen and wash, La Trobe Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria, H5531.



Charles S Bennett, Demolishing First Government House. "Captain Lonsdale's", watercolour, 1891, La Trobe Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria, H3846.



J D Stone, Government House, Melbourne, oil on canvas, Rex Nan Kivell Collection, National Library of Australia, NK 110. Toorak House, St Georges Road, Toorak, served as the second Government House in Melbourne from 1854 to 1874.



W F E Liardet, The Melbourne Auction Company's chambers, with a land sale in progress, 10 June 1840 [1875], watercolour, detail, La Trobe Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria, H28250/9.



Edward La Trobe Bateman, The water shed, c. 1852-54, pencil and Chinese white on brown paper, La Trobe Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria, H98. 135/113.



Edward La Trobe Bateman, The larger rockery at Jolimont, c.1852-54, pencil and Chinese white on brown paper, La Trobe Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria, H98. 135/11.



Wrought iron hurdle fence, "Woolmers", Longford, Tasmania, photograph, Miles Lewis.



William Strutt, The Solicitors and the Water Cart; Stop! Stop! Stop!!! A real incident which happened in Collins St East, opposite to the Mechanics Institute, 1850-62, Victorian Parliamentary Library.

literature now contains studies suggesting that there may be an increased risk of developing oral cancer from regular use. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Listerine>)

### 'Sol of Argryrol (Poison)'

Argryrol, a compound of silver for use especially in ophthalmic practice as a topical antimicrobial agent, was developed by a Dr Barnes and first marketed in 1902. (*The Pharmaceutical Journal* Vol 265 (2000) pp.933-4,

### 'Chlorodyne (Tinct. Chloroform. et Morph. Co.)'

Chlorodyne was a patent medicine invented in the late 19th century by Dr Collis Browne, and widely advertised and sold in the 1890s. The full description in the *Materia Medica*, 'Tinctura Chloroformi et Morphinae Composita', confirms its opiate content. The composition was fixed by the British Pharmacopoeia of 1885 comprising chloroform, morphine, alcohol, liquorice extract, ether, peppermint and syrup. It was available until the mid 20th century for diarrhoea and coughs. (*Everyman's Encyclopaedia* Vol. 3 p. 286).

### 'Aspirin'

Formulated in 1897 by Felix Hoffman, a chemist employed by Bayer & Co, aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid) became widely used for pain relief. (Sneader W. *Drug Discovery: A History* 2005) When the German patents were suspended during the World War 1, it was manufactured in Australia under the name "Aspro" by Alfred Nicholas (1881-1937). (See Wall, J. 'Nicholas, Alfred Michael' in *Australian Dictionary of Biography* Vo.11)

These medicines in the La Trobe Chest must have been added after La Trobe gave the chest to Mr McCallum in 1854, probably in the first half of the 20th century, well before the chest was given to the National Trust.

Not all of the medicines in the La Trobe Chest are from the later period. Also included, to take just one example, was **Dovers Powder**, a combination of opium and ipecacuanha developed by Dr Thomas Dover (1660-1742), who published the formula in *The Ancient Physician's Legacy to his Country* (first published 1732, Facsimile of 1742 edition 1974), as a treatment for gout: 'Take opium one ounce, Salt-Petre and Tartar vitriolated each four ounces, Ipecacuana (sic) one ounce, Liquorish (sic) one ounce.' (To explain these ingredients: Salt-Petre was Nitre, or crude potassium nitrate.[*Everyman's Encyclopaedia* Vol. 8, p.703, Vol. 10, p. 571], Licorice or liquorice is an extract from the dried root of *Glycyrrhiza glabra* (L.), used medicinally since ancient times as a remedy for coughs, and as a vehicle for disguising the taste of other medicines (Grieve's *A Modern Herbal* 1995 pp. 487 -92).

Dover's Powder was widely used as a fever remedy and for pain relief over the following 200 years. The *Compendium* praised it as:

'A valuable diaphoretic and sedative, as opium can be given in this form when it would be hazardous in any other. It is given in rheumatism, gout, diabetes, dropsy, diarrhoea, dysentery, and in inflammatory and other fevers.' (p. 21)

The powder was to be taken in a dose of forty to sixty or seventy grains in a glass of white wine. The combination of opium with an emetic (ipecacuanha) meant that despite the sense of euphoria induced by the opium, large quantities could not be ingested.

### What would the La Trobe Chest's original contents have been?

In terms of our understanding as to how Charles Joseph La Trobe used his Medicine Chest, it is important to find out, if possible, what the contents would have been when La Trobe brought the Chest to Melbourne.



The original contents of the La Trobe Chest may have been similar to those in another in the National Trust's Collections, Caroline Armytage's Medicine Chest, now held at Como. Caroline Armytage, nee Tuckwell (1832-1909) arrived in Melbourne with her family aboard the *Atlanta* in 1849 when she was seventeen (Anita Selzer, *The Armytages of Como: Pastoral Pioneers* p. 35). It is possible that the family brought the Chest with them as part of their equipment for life in the colonies, just as Georgiana McCrae had done nine years earlier.

The Como Chest can be dated fairly accurately. Labels on the phials show that the kit, which we may call the 'Como Chest', was prepared in about 1848 by Hopwood & Sons, Richmond, Surrey, and imported to Australia. The proud assertion on Hopwood & Son's labels 'Chemists in Ordinary to the Queen/The Queen Dowager/and HRH the Duke of Cambridge' demonstrate the value attached to royal patronage. But the patrons named in the labels also indicate their date: Adelaide, the Queen Dowager died in 1849, and Adolphus, Duke of Cambridge in 1850 (Simon Schama, *A History of Britain* Vol 3, 1776-2000). The date of about 1848 is confirmed by a set of weights to be found among the accessories in the chest, each of which is marked, 'Apothecaries weight registered March 16 1847'. The Como Chest seems, therefore, to have been assembled about ten years later than the La Trobe Chest, but there are good grounds for the suggestion that the contents would have been similar.

Most of the medicines contained in the Como Chest were prepared as powders, tinctures etc in England and came to Australia in that form. A few items appear to have been added later, as they carry labels from local pharmacists such as T. Obbinson, Pharmacist, Toorak, W. J. Bull, Malop Street Geelong, and Charles Ogg Family Chemist Gardeners Creek Road.

As discussed earlier, the La Trobe Chest was originally stocked by Savory & Moore. As the medicines in the Como Chest were prepared by Hopwood & Sons, confirmation of their use by Savory & Moore was

obtained by reference to Savory's *Compendium* (1878). With two exceptions, all of the medicines in the Como Chest were included in 'A List of Medicines and Appliances that should be kept in every house for domestic use.' Those not included, Tincture of Aloe, and Friar's Balsm were referred to in a later section of the *Compendium* 'Drugs, Chemicals, etc with the general properties and doses of each.' The inference is available that these medicines continued to be in use and included in Savory & Moore Medicine Chests until 1878.

That the remedies originally contained in the La Trobe Chest are likely to have been similar to those in the Como Chest is further confirmed by comparison with another, more elaborate medicine chest, the Dawkins Chest which dates from c 1780 and is described in detail in Young's *Antique Medicine Chests* (1994). Many, but not all, of the medicines in the Como Chest were in the Dawkins Chest, which was however much larger and contained more medicines than the Como Chest. The Como Chest is also much smaller than the La Trobe Chest. Medicines common to the Dawkins Chest and the Como Chest were Calcined Magnesia, Castor Oil, Paregoric Elixir, Tincture of Rhubarb, Ipecacuanha Powder, James' Powder, Calomel, Aloes and Jalap (Powder). For these medicines we thus have a basis to infer continuing use of these medicines for the period from at least 1780 to 1878. The La Trobe Chest was originally set up during this period.

As we go through the remedies in the Como Chest, I have set out brief notes on the contents of the phials, explaining their composition and their use in La Trobe's time. Two sources have been consulted in considering how the medicines in the Como Chest were intended to be used: the anonymous publication *Everyman His Own Doctor or A Cure of the Human Body* (1835), and Savory & Moore's *Compendium*. My approach has been to seek to understand the usage of the age rather than to judge it in the light of current medical practice, although an occasional comment is made in some cases.

## **The contents of the Como Chest, and the uses made of them**

Three compartments of the Como Chest when examined were empty. Of the remaining eleven compartments comprising the upper section, one label was unable to be deciphered. In one compartment there was a long slender phial of a different design to the others, with a label which was not intact, although the handwritten name 'Mrs C Armytage' is plain enough. Part of the name of the chemist is missing, but it does not appear to be Hopwood & Sons. Seven compartments had phials with Hopwood & Sons labels which indicated that they had contained herbal or plant derived medicines, as follows:

### **'Essence of Ginger'**

Ginger (*Zingiber officinale Roscoe*) has been used medicinally since ancient times. The rhizomes of Ginger have been used as an anti-emetic. The *Compendium* said that it was 'prescribed in disorders proceeding from impaired digestion, in flatulent and spasmodic affections of the stomach, in hysterical and nervous complaints.' (p. 22-3)

### **'Castor Oil'**

Castor Oil, extracted by cold pressing from the seeds of the Castor Oil Plant (*Ricinus communis* L.), has been used as a purgative for thousands of years. Its use has been traced back to the ancient civilisations of Mesopotamia and Egypt. It was used by the Romans. Pliny described the oil as 'singular to purge and evacuate the belly.' (Holland P. *Plinies Natural! Historie*. 23rd Book, p. 161). The *Compendium* ranked it as 'a valuable aperient; for while in doses of from half an ounce to an ounce, it thoroughly evacuates the bowels, it does so with little irritation ...' (p15).

### **'Tincture of Aloe'**

Tincture of Aloe was derived from the leaves of *Aloe vera* L. and other species of Aloe. Aloes have been

used medicinally for more than a thousand years as a purgative and as a tonic. Grieve wrote that:

'Aloes in one form or another is the commonest domestic medicine and is the basis of most proprietary or so called "patent" pills.' (*A Modern Herbal* p.29).

### **'Tincture of Jalap'**

Jalap, derived from the root of the Jalap Bindweed (*Ipomoea purga* (Wend.) syn. *Convolvulus jalapa* L.) has been used as a purgative to treat constipation and other intestinal disorders. The *Compendium* described it as 'A recognised aperient. When administered in moderate doses it is a certain purgative, operating without griping; but in large doses it is apt to gripe, and produce copious watery evacuation.' (p36) It was introduced to Europe from the Americas in the 16th century (Sneader, W. *Drug Discovery: A History* 2005 p.33).

### **'Tincture of Rhubarb'**

Powdered rhizomes and other extracts of Rhubarb (*Rheum palmatum* L. or *R. officinale*) have been used since the Middle Ages in laxatives and other medicines (van Wyk and Wink *Medicinal Plants of the World* p 270). The *Compendium* describes Turkey Rhubarb as:

'one of the best known medicines in the Pharmacopoeia. Stomachic, tonic and purgative. It is administered in the form of powder, infusion, and tincture .. " The tincture is not given in doses sufficiently large to act as a purgative, but it is a valuable tonic when given with some bitter infusion. It is much used in dyspepsia in doses of from two to five grains.' (p. 55)

### **'Elixir Paregoric'**

The recipe or 'receipt' for Paregoric Elixir in *Every Man his Own Doctor* reads:

'Of flowers of benzoin half an ounce, and of opium two drachms. Infuse in one pound of the volatile aromatic spirit, four or five days, frequently shaking the bottle, afterwards strain the elixir. This is an agreeable and safe way of administering the opium. It eases pain, allays tickling coughs, relieves difficult breathing, and is useful in many disorders of children, particularly the whooping (sic) cough.'

(Benzoic acid, or flowers of benzoin, is obtained from a balsamic resin derived from the tree *Styrax benzoin* (DRY.) of Sumatra, Java etc, according to *Grieve's A Modern Herbal* p. 95)

Other sources give different ingredients, but opium remained the key. The *Compendium* noted, 'This preparation contains opium, and where the chest is free from inflammation, may be given in doses of a teaspoonful in water, or any mucilaginous drink two or three times a day, to allay an ordinary cough.' (p. 49) Opium, from the opium poppy (*Papaver somniferum* Linn.), has been used medicinally since the civilizations of Greece and Rome, although the danger of overdose was well understood.

### 'Camph. Spirit of Wine'

From *Everyman His Own Doctor* we learn that Camphorated Spirit of Wine consisted of an ounce of camphor dissolved in a pint of rectified spirits, to be 'chiefly employed as an embrocation in bruises, palsies, the chronic rheumatism, and for preventing gangrenes.' Camphor is a crystalline compound obtained chiefly from the camphor laurel tree (*Cinnamomum camphora* T. Nees and Eberm.), according to *Grieve's A Modern Herbal*. The *Compendium* confirms external use 'in liniments in rheumatic and other painful affections of the muscles, joints, etc', and refers to its use as a cure for cholera. (p. 13)

The phials in the remaining upper compartments bore the following Hopwood & Sons labels:

### 'Calcined Magnesia'

From *Everyman His Own Doctor* we learn that calcined magnesia was:

'a powder taken occasionally, composed of ten grains of the powder of Colombia, with twelve grains of magnesia, taken for acidity of stomach. (p.16)

The same source gave it as a remedy for:

'Whitlow' (inflammation and swelling in the end of a fingers or toe) included, to assist the suggested application of leeches, a dose of 'opening physic - such as fifteen grains of rhubarb powder, mixed with the same quantity of magnesia. This may be mixed with half a wine glass of water and swallowed.' (p. 15)

The *Compendium* described it as 'Antacid, and a gentle purgative in large doses; in small doses it is used to neutralize the acids formed in the stomach under certain circumstances.'(p. 41). (To explain the ingredients, *Colombia*, aka Colombo or Calumba, the dried root of *Jateorhiza palmata* (Miers), was, according to *Grieve's A Modern Herbal*, used as an aid to digestion usually in combination with other tonics. *Magnesia* is magnesium oxide, a white tasteless substance used in medicine as an antacid and laxative from the mid 18th century.

### 'Aether'

Ether, is a volatile liquid diethyl ether, obtained by the action of sulphuric acid on ethyl alcohol (*Everyman's Encyc.* Vol 4, p. 683). Ether dissolved in twice its volume of alcohol, a preparation known after its inventor as 'Hoffmann's drops', was taken in the 18th century by mouth to relieve stomach, abdominal and pelvic pain. The *Compendium* said that Spirit of Ether:

'was intended as a substitute for Hoffman's anodyne, the composition of which he did not reveal. As a narcotic, calming irritation and lulling to sleep, it would seem superior to ether itself.' (p.25)

The use of ether as an anaesthetic was developed in the USA in the 1840s (Sneader *Drug Discovery 2005* pp79-80). Ether seems still to have been used as a medicine in the late 19th century: the ether bottle was reportedly used by Guy de Maupassant to relieve a violent migraine in 1887 (Julian Barnes, *London Review of Books* 5 November 2009 p. 27).

### 'Friar Balsm'

Friar's Balsam is 'a compound tincture of benzoin, prepared by macerating benzoin with storax, tolu and aloes in rectified spirit. Occasionally used as an expectorant in chronic bronchitis and also as an antiseptic for small cuts or as a protective covering for wounds under plasters and bandages.' (*Everyman's Encyc.* Vol 5 p338) The ingredients listed in a modern recipe show that they were all derived from plants as set out, the derivation has been confirmed by reference to *Grieve's A Modern Herbal*:

Siam Benzoin resin (*Styrax tonkinensis*) 47%

Storax Balsam (*Liquidambar orientalis*) 17%

Balsam of Tolu (*Myroxylon balsamum*) 17%

Balsam of Peru (*Myroxylon pereirae*) 9%

Cape Aloe leaf latex (*Aloe ferox*) 4%

Myrrh tears (*Commiphora abyssinica* & *molmol*) 4%

Angelica root (*Angelica archangelica*) 2%

The same source says that through its 600 year history Friar's Balsam has been known by various names. The ingredients set out are very similar to those of 'Balm of Life' in *Every Man His Own Doctor* (p. 11), with the addition of olibanum (Frankincense), an aromatic

resin obtained from the tree *Boswellia thurifera*, and St John's Wort flowers (*Hypericum perforatum* L.). As Grieve's *A Modern Herbal* explains, many of these ingredients have been used medicinally since ancient times.

The bottom compartment or drawer of the Como Chest contained a container labelled 'Blue Pills' and three containers of unnamed Pills from various sources (Hopwood, T. Obbinson, Pharmacist Toorak, W. J. Bull Malop Street Geelong). The Blue Pills label did not contain the name of any pharmacist, but the type and layout were similar to the Hopwood & Sons labels. Blue Pills (Mercury with chalk tablets) were popular in the 19th century to treat venereal disease (see *Every Man His Own Doctor* p. 21). However, *The Compendium* suggests a wider use, describing Mercurial Pill (Blue Pill) as:

'A most useful medicine in diseases connected with diminished secretion of bile, in dyspepsia, scrofula, jaundice, syphilis, and cutaneous eruptions, and is by far the best form for the internal exhibition of mercury.'(p. 42)

There were five compartments in the bottom drawer containing phials with Hopwood & Sons labels indicating the following contents:

### 'Calomel'

Calomel, a compound of mercury (Mercurous Chloride), was once regarded as being of great value to medicine, and was one of the 'most frequently prescribed drugs in the 19th century.'(Sneader p. 46) *The Compendium* described it as:

'A mercurial preparation more extensively and more usefully employed than almost any other article in the Materia Medica. Its principal use, however is as a purge, conjoined with other

ingredients; for this purpose it is administered in doses of from three to six grains, combined with or followed by cathartic extract, rhubarb, senna, or other laxative .... '(p. 13)

According to *Every Man His Own Doctor*, it was to be used together with other ingredients such as rhubarb to purge worms (p. 38.)

### 'Ipecacuanha Powd'

Ipecacuanha Powder was derived from the root of the Brazilian plant *Cephalis ipecacuanha* (Willd.), It has been used in Europe since the 17th century as a purgative, an emetic and an expectorant, according to Young. Ipecacuanha was an ingredient of *Dover's Powder*, as noted earlier. The recipe for Vomiting Draught in *Every Man His Own Doctor* is

'Ipecacuanha in powder one scruple, water an ounce, simple syrup (i.e. One part sugar to one part water) one ounce and mix them. Persons who require a stronger vomit may add to the above half a grain or a grain of emetic tartar,'

(Tartar emetic was the common name for antimony potassium tartrate, Antimony was used in medicine extensively in 17th century France, tartar emetic being described in 1631, It was used as an emetic and expectorant, to produce sweating, and in the treatment of several diseases, but had frequent toxic side effects, according to Sneader p, 57).

The *Compendium* described Ipecacuanha as

'The most valuable and safest of the vegetable emetics. May be given to the youngest infant in doses of half a grain or a grain blended with sugar .... (p, 35)

Ipecacuanha, also known as 'ipecac', remained in popular use into the 20th century, and is still marketed as an emetic today. An example is provided by the popular children's novel *Anne of Green Gables* (1908), in which the heroine saves the life of a three year old child suffering from croup by doses of ipecac.

### 'Mercury with Chalk'

The *Compendium* described this as

'An alterative, and is occasionally given to correct the biliary secretion in children, and especially to increase it when deficient in quantity, It is also employed with much benefit in the diarrhoea of children.'(p, 42)

Grey Powder (mercury and chalk mixture) was still included in the *British Pharmaceutical Codex* of 1954 as a purgative for children, although omitted from the next edition due to belated recognition of the risk of mercury poisoning, (Sneader 2005 p. 46)

### 'James's Powder'

Dr James's Powder was a patent medicine introduced in the mid-eighteenth century in England for the relief of pain and fever. Roy Porter (*History Today* Vol36, 1986) described it as 'the eighteenth century favourite,' In one twenty year period some 1,612,800 doses of James's Powders, said to combine the virtues of antimony with those of mercury, were sold, according to Roy Porter's *Health for Sale* (1989). The chief ingredient was antimony, a toxic metallic element occurring principally in stibnite. It has been claimed that its use caused symptoms similar to those of arsenic poisoning.

### 'Dovers Powder'

See the earlier discussion.

How were such remedies actually used by colonists in Victoria in La Trobe's time?

Sources such as *Everyman His Own Doctor*, or the *Compendium* tell us how these medicines were intended to be used by those who compiled Medicine Chests or told people how to use their contents. Whether the medicines were in fact used as advised by colonists in Victoria in the mid 19th century is hard to tell. Some light may be shed on this question by reference to what they wrote in journals and letters. However, references to the use of medicines in colonists' journals are surprisingly few. *The Henty Journals*, for example, contain many references to members of the tiny settlement at Portland being ill, but only two, for 29 January and 9 September 1836 refer to the medicines used to treat illness:

29 January 1836 'myself under a course of Calomel'

9 September 1836 'Edwards & Stephen full of Jallup.'

The course of Calomel does not appear to have done Edward Henty any serious harm, as he survived and prospered for a further forty-two years until his death in 1878. The 'Jallup' could have been a prepared Tincture of Jalap such as that contained in the Como Chest, or derived from plants grown by the Hentys themselves. Jalap is the common name for *Ipomoea purga* Wend, but other species of *Ipomoea* are considered to have similar properties (See Whittet, J. *Weeds: The Farmers Handbook* (1962) p. 263) As the Hentys had come to Portland from Van Diemen's Land, their 'Jallup' could have been an *Ipomoea* plant from the Convolvulaceae family. *Ipomea* (sic) was offered for sale by Daniel Bunce in Hobart in 1836. Jalap was one of the plants taken on by the First Fleet at Rio de Janeiro in August 1787 (Collins, D *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales* 1798), but may not have survived. Perhaps an imported prepared Tincture is more likely to have been used by Henty.

An anecdotal account of the use of medicines is available from Georgiana McCrae. In a letter dated July 19, 1846 describing the cottage on Arthur's Seat and her life there, Georgiana wrote,

'Thanks to the case of drugs your Papa gave me, I have become a famous 'medicine woman', patients arriving here, even from the Heads, and as I dispense *gratis*, my practice is likely to increase. Cuts, splinter wounds, boils, and sand blight, have been successfully treated. Seldom ill ourselves; the worst sickness, scarlatina, yielded to simples, and dishes of saffron tea.' (Hugh McCrae ed *Georgiana's Journal: Melbourne 1841-1865*, p. 258)

There is much of interest in this passage. As it is known that Georgiana shipped with her luggage a Medicine Chest, the 'case of drugs' may well have been like the Como Chest, with similar contents. By 'scarlatina', Georgiana probably referred to 'scarlet fever' ('a contagious febrile disease, now chiefly of children, caused by streptococci and characterised by a scarlet eruption' (*Macquarie Concise Dictionary*). 'Simples', in popular usage in the early 19th century, meant herbs used medicinally; this usage is archaic. But what herbs was Georgiana referring to? Was her reference to saffron tea something from the 'case of drugs' or made from a plant grown in her garden? Saffron was not usually to be found in the Medicine Chests of the 19th century. The reference to saffron in Savory & Moore's 1878 edition was 'Very little used in medicine; its chief value is for cooking, confectionary and for dyeing purposes.'

Saffron teas, derived from a variety of plants, were however used in traditional folk medicine in England and Ireland. The reference to saffron tea could possibly be to a tea of Saffron derived from (*Crocus sativus* L.), but is much more likely to have been to Safflower, sometimes called Bastard Saffron (*Carthamus tinctorius* L.). The name 'Bastard Saffron' has been

used in England since at least the 17th century to refer to a *Carthamus* plant (Johnson, T *Gerard's Herbal* 1633),

Grieve's *A Modern Herbal* refers to evidence given at an inquest in England in 1921 as to the prevalence of a domestic custom of giving saffron 'tea' flavoured with brandy in cases of measles. But she noted that saffron was expensive, and had largely been replaced with the Safflower (*Carthamus tinctorius* L.):

'In domestic practice these flowers are used in children's and infants' complaints - measles, fevers, and eruptive skin complaints. An infusion is made of ½ oz. of the flowers to a pint of boiling water taken warm to produce diaphoresis (ie sweating),'

This could be what Georgiana McCrae was doing. It is likely that her 'saffron tea' was derived from *Carthamus tinctorius*, which was another early introduction to Australia. Governor King's list of plants growing in New South Wales in 1803 included 'Carthamus, Bastard Saffron,' C, *tinctorius* is likely to have been under cultivation in the vicinity of Melbourne by 1846, as it was naturalized there by the late 1850s, according to Sir Joseph Hooker's essay 'On some of the naturalized plants of Australia' in *Flora Tasmaniae* (1860),

#### **How effective were these medicines, and what dangers accompanied their use?**

A comprehensive enquiry into the effectiveness of the medicines in the Como Chest is beyond the scope of this paper and would require further research. The absence of any antibiotic would have severely limited the effectiveness of the Medicine Chest in many cases. Some of the medicines, however, may well have been effective as purgatives to relieve constipation, or as emetics. Elixir Paregoric and Dover's Powder could bring effective pain relief. There were, however, risks

to health associated with some. For example, opium was widely used in a range of medicines in the 19th century, but the dangers of addiction and overdose were becoming well known through Coleridge's notorious addiction, and Thomas de Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium-eater* (1821), a work referred to in the discussion of the abuse of opium in *The British Flora Medica* (p. 242). To take another example, mercury poisoning often resulted from the use of Calomel. It was discovered in 1948 that a common infantile and childhood illness called acrodynia or 'pink disease' was caused by the widespread use of calomel in treating childhood teething and constipation. Between 1939 and 1948, pink disease was officially recorded as the cause of death of 585 children in England and Wales (Davis, L, *Western Journal of Medicine* Vol 173, p. 19)

Even in La Trobe's time there were some who questioned the use of popular medicines. There was a well developed concern about 'quack' medicine; one of the definitions of the word offered by Dr Johnson (1799) was 'An artful tricking practitioner in physic'. The *Macquarie* gives 'an ignorant or fraudulent pretender to medical skill' as a meaning; and the use in 'quack medicine' as, 'falsely claiming curative powers'. Roy Porter's *Health for Sale: Quackery in England 1660-1850* (1989) shows how pervasive the practice was in England and how contentious the question was as to which medicines were quack remedies. Robert Southey, in his *Letters from England* (1807), warned that a better title for a work such as *Everyman His Own Doctor* would be *Everyman His Own Poisoner*. Southey disliked quackery of any kind, but the problem was widespread. As quoted by Porter, *The Lancet* in 1836 denounced the influence of quackery:

'...never have quacks, quackish doctrines, and quack medicines, exercised a greater influence over the minds and bodies of the people of this country, than they exert at the present epoch,'

It should be remembered that even at the time some of the medicines contained in the Como Chest, particularly

the patent medicines, would have been dismissed by some as quack medicines. To give one example, as noted earlier, the Como Chest included a container labelled 'James Powder'. La Trobe's friend Washington Irving, in his *Life of Goldsmith* described the poet Oliver Goldsmith as having 'incurred an unfortunate habit of quacking himself with James's powders, a fashionable panacea of the day.' (Irving 1859). What is far from certain, however, is which of the remedies included in the Como Chest would have been regarded as quack medicine in La Trobe's time.

### Conclusion

It can be difficult today to comprehend the day-to-day details of life in La Trobe's time. The treatments and medicines in use today are very different from those available in the first half of the 19th century. A study of the La Trobe Chest and other Medicine Chests of the period together with their contents enhances our understanding of the way of life of the early European settlers in Victoria, and permits us to enter in imagination into the world before Joseph Lister (1827-1912), Louis Pasteur (1822-1895) and successors such as Alexander Fleming (1881-1955) and Howard Florey (1898-1968) revolutionised medical practice,

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<http://WWW.N,herbaled.org/ITHM/Compounds/friars.html>

# Rose Pellet's Embroidery Sampler: a Research Report.

By Museum of Australia

*Rose Pellet's sampler was purchased by the National Museum of Australia in Canberra at Joel's auction in Melbourne in 2001. The information in the Museum's report after purchase was compiled by a former curator at the Museum, and was forwarded to La Trobeana by Cheryl Crilly, one of the Curators of the Australian Journeys gallery. As she noted in her covering letter, 'it is a wonderful object with a great story and we hope one day to display it in our Australian Journeys gallery'.*



*Embroidery Sampler made by Rose Augustine Pellet, 1847.*

*Purchased by the National Museum of Australia in 2007.*

## Description

Embroidery sampler in wooden frame with gold trim and glass. Embroidery on the sampler is capital and lower case letter alphabet in various colours. Sampler is covered with embroidery birds, numbers, flowers and houses, and has a decorative border around the outer edge, Centre in black reads:

"Jesus permit thy gracious name to stand:/ As the first effort of an infant hand/ And as her fingers oe'r the canvas move/ Engage her tender heart to seek thy love."

At the bottom of the sampler in red embroidery stitch is "Rose Augustine Peilet/ finished FebY 12/ 1847/ in the 10th Yr of her age".

## Object Background/Provenance

The 'signature' embroidered on the sampler indicates it was made by ten year old Rose Augustine Pellet on 12 February 1847, Rose Pellet was born in Neuchatel, Switzerland, in 1837, the only child of 36 year old Charlotte Pellet, nee Matthey, and her husband Jean Pellet. <sup>1</sup> At age three, Rose migrated to Australia with her mother, who had divorced her father in 1840 shortly before their departure. They travelled as cabin passengers aboard the ship *Neptune* sailing from London in 1841, <sup>2</sup> Their migration had been personally encouraged by Superintendent, and later Lieutenant-Governor of Victoria, Charles Joseph La Trobe and his wife Sophie, née de Montmollin, daughter of Swiss Councillor of State, Frederic Auguste de Montmollin, <sup>3</sup>

A very close relationship existed between Charlotte and Rose Pellet and the La Trobe family, Charlotte Pellet had been nursemaid to the prominent Montmollin family and, following Sophie's marriage to La Trobe in 1835, went on to serve three generations of the La Trobe family as a valued and loyal member of the household, Rose had been named after Sophie's sister, Rose Isabelle de Meuron, who was her godmother, and for Sophie's mother, Rose Augustine de

Montmollin.<sup>4</sup> Rose de Meuron later became La Trobe's second wife.<sup>5</sup> Upon their arrival in Australia, Charlotte and Rose Pellet resided at La Trobe's residence at Jolimont - the prefabricated cottage which La Trobe had brought with him from London, and in which the La Trobes and the Pellets were to live for almost fifteen years. La Trobe's letters make clear that he regarded the Pellets as part of his family.<sup>6</sup> He took a significant interest in Rose's life, including her marriage in 1854 to Frederic Amiet, one of the most successful vigneron of the colony, whose migration had been assisted by La Trobe in the interests of developing viticulture in Australia, La Trobe gave Rose away at the wedding, where she wore black in mourning for Sophie La Trobe who had died shortly beforehand in Switzerland.<sup>7</sup>

Rose and Frederic Amiet established vineyards in the Barwon Valley near Geelong, making a notable contribution to the development of the winemaking industry in that area.<sup>8</sup> The Amiets had three sons and a daughter, After Frederic's early death from complications following a road accident in 1864, Rose lived in nearby Inverleigh until her own death in 1910. Her mother, Charlotte Pellet, remained with her in Australia, despite La Trobe's dedicated efforts to have her return to England with him in 1854. Charlotte and Rose lived together at Inverleigh until Charlotte's death on 9 April 1877.<sup>9</sup> They, and several of their descendents, are buried at the Inverleigh Cemetery.<sup>10</sup>

Rose Pellet's sampler was completed while she was living at Jolimont, most likely under the tutelage of the governess employed to educate La Trobe's two younger daughters Eleanora and Cecile.<sup>11</sup> It begins with each letter of the alphabet embroidered neatly in coloured thread. This script is followed by the numerals zero to nine. Typical of embroidery samplers of the period, the following prayer in verse features beneath the numbers:

Jesus permit thy gracious name to stand:  
 As the first effort of an infant hand  
 And as her fingers o'er the canvas move  
 Engage her tender heart to seek thy love.

## Endnotes

- 1 *La Trobeana*, journal of the C. J. La Trobe Society Inc., vol.8, no, 1, March 2009, 4.
- 2 *La Trobeana*, op. cit.
- 3 Hancock, Marguerite *Colonial Consorts*, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 2001, 16-17.
- 4 Hancock, op. cit.
- 5 Henderson, Raymond *From Jolimont to Yering*, Melbourne, Roundabout, 2006, 70.
- 6 *La Trobeana*, ibid, 4-9.
- 7 Hancock, ibid.
- 8 Henderson, ibid.
- 9 *La Trobeana*, ibid, 7.
- 10 Inverleigh Burial Records, compiled by Dianne Hughes, 2004, located on Geelong Historical Society web site at [www.zades.com.au](http://www.zades.com.au) accessed 19 December 2006.
- 11 Henderson, ibid, 58.

# Two Employees of Charles Joseph and Sophie La Trobe: a Research Report.

By Jennifer Bantow

*Jennifer Bantow is President of the Geelong and Region Branch, National Trust and a C J La Trobe Society member since 2004. She was Honorary Property Manager of Barwon Grange (built in 1855) for ten years. Before retirement, Jennifer was Project Officer at Deakin University, Warrnambool and Geelong campuses, in the Centres for Regional Development and Australian Studies.*

James Hadlow was a Gardener employed by C, J. La Trobe in 1849 and Caroline Caustin was a Domestic Servant employed by Mrs La Trobe in 1852.

## James Hadlow - Gardener

On a ship's disposal list<sup>1</sup> in 1849, C, J. La Trobe of Melbourne, H. M. Superintendent, is recorded as the employer of James Hadlow.

On 28 June 1849 the ship *Whitby*, having departed from Plymouth on the 15 February 1849, arrived at Port Phillip carrying the Hadlow family whose native place was Sheerness in County Kent, England.

James Hadlow's 'calling' was listed as Gardener<sup>2</sup>, he was aged 47 and he was accompanied by his wife Elizabeth<sup>3</sup>, Housekeeper, aged 40, and their children, William 12, Louisa 9, Elizabeth 8, Amelia 2 and an infant named Robert. The religion of the family was Church of England and James, his wife Elizabeth and son William could both read and write, and his daughters Louisa and Elizabeth could read, James Hadlow's term of engagement to La Trobe and rate of wages are not specified and the position is described as a 'private engagement'.

On the 1856 Voting Roll James Hadlow was living in Fitzroy in Hanover Street as a freeholder. He died at that address in 1860 aged 59 years.

Of the five children, William Hadlow married Ann Reyland in 1859 and they produced 6 children, all born in Dunolly, Louisa married Aristide Cattabeni in 1861, Amelia married Martin Arenas from Barcelona in 1867 and Robert married Annie Costello in 1870 and they had 4 children all born in Fitzroy, Research is underway tracing a daughter, Anna, who is recorded on James's certificate.

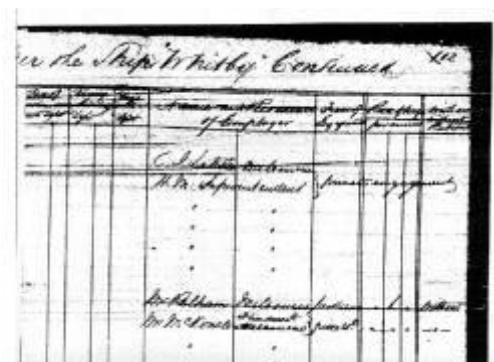


Fig. 1 (left and right) The Whitby Disposal List.

## Caroline Caustin - Domestic Servant

On another disposal list two and a half years later, Mrs La Trobe of Melbourne is recorded as employing Caroline Caustin, a domestic servant aged 28 years who had arrived in Hobson's Bay on the ship *Joshua* on 30 January 1852. The *Joshua* had departed from Plymouth on 5 November 1851. Travelling with Caroline, was Anna Caustin aged 30 years who was employed by Mrs Dalgety of Melbourne. Both Caroline and Anna were from Suffolk and were probably sisters. They could read and write and their religion was Wesleyan. Caroline's term of employment with Mrs La Trobe was for one month on a payment of £20 p.a.

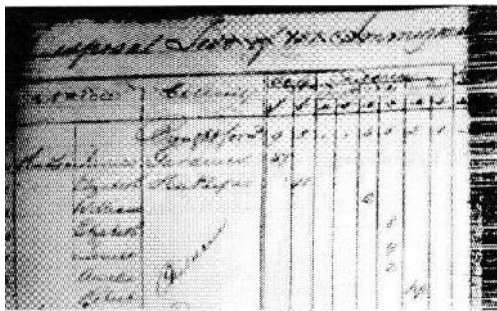


Fig. 2 Disposal list of the immigrant ship the *Whitby* showing the Hadlow family Reel 99, p 102 [1849]. VPRS 14 Register of Assisted British Immigrants 1839-1871, Geelong Heritage Centre.

*In the course of her research, Jennifer has recently made contact with Norman Hadlow, the great, great grandson of James and Elizabeth Hadlow, who was delighted to learn more about his ancestor.*

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> The Register of Assisted Immigrants from the United Kingdom 1839-1871 contains the nominal and disposal lists of assisted immigrants arriving in Victoria from the U. K. The purpose of a disposal list was to record the placement of assisted immigrants, some of whom were already contracted prior to departure from the U. K. to employees resident in Victoria. In return, the immigrant would work for an employer for an agreed length of time under certain conditions.

<sup>2</sup> The occupation of James Hadlow is recorded on the 1841 Census (English) as Fruiterer. It would be interesting to know if he planted an orchard at Jolimont.

<sup>3</sup> Her parents were James and Elizabeth Phillips. When Elizabeth's husband, James Hadlow died, she married William George (in 1862). She died in 1877 aged 70 years.

## A Word from the Treasurer

The C J La Trobe Society is in a comfortable position financially, as we begin our activities for 2010. The funds accrued from membership subscriptions each year are above the amounts required for servicing our members. However, this is only the case because of the generous sponsorship of *La Trobeana* by member Peter Lovell of Lovell Chen Architects & Heritage Consultants. I think most members would agree that the Society's journal is the most worthwhile and most tangible output of the La Trobe Society and, as our top priority, would want to see it continue.

The La Trobe Society Fellowship which has been offered at the State Library of Victoria for the past three years, will not be advertised in 2010. It is unfortunate that, in the current financial climate, we were unable to find a sponsor for this prestigious program this year. However, after some deep and far-reaching thought, it has been decided to put a greater effort into funding a Fellowship again next year, and perhaps continuing the award on a biennial basis. Your advice and suggestions on this matter would be gratefully received.

John Drury

**Honorary Treasurer**

## Friends of La Trobe's Cottage

The Friends of La Trobe's Cottage have been actively working with the National Trust over the summer period.

The National Trust has appointed Scott J Strachan Architect and Project Manager to overview the stimulus package works, including carpentry repairs, painting, a heritage walk trail, and possibly roof repairs. Some of these will be starting in the next few weeks. Meanwhile, sub-committees are working on the masterplan, gardens, education programme, interpretation, events and maintenance.

Australia Day was celebrated with a special house opening, flag-raising, folk music and teas. The Rupertswood Battery fired their muskets in salute to the flag, contributing to the festive atmosphere. Two hundred people toured the Cottage and dallied to enjoy the atmosphere in the Cottage grounds. It is only right, we believe, that La Trobe's Cottage should be part of the celebrations in Melbourne's Domain.

Many visitors have toured the Cottage during its Sunday afternoon openings. The Cottage is open between 2 and 4 pm every Sunday until the end of May. A Cottage tour also forms part of a most informative tour, including Government House, by appointment on Mondays and Wednesdays; bookings essential on 86637260.

We look forward with enthusiasm to developments at the Cottage during the coming year.

Helen Botham

**Chair, FOLTC**

La Trobe's Cottage  
Australia Day  
Celebration 2010



*Flag raising*



*The event*



*Firing*



*Teas*

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

### La Trobe's Birthday

**Saturday 20 March 2010**

**5.30 -7.30 p.m.**

An evening picnic to celebrate Charles Joseph La Trobe's 209th birthday will be held at La Trobe's Cottage on Saturday 20 March 2010 from 5,30 p.m. All La Trobe Society members, Friends of La Trobe's Cottage, National Trust members and their friends are welcome.

This informal gathering will be an opportunity to appreciate the work of renovating and refurbishing the Cottage which has already begun. The Victorian Folk Music Band will provide background entertainment, and birthday cake, soft drinks and sparkling wine for the toast to La Trobe will be provided.

Please bring a plate of savouries to share, and something to drink yourself.

**Venue: La Trobe's Cottage**

**Cnr. Birdwood Avenue and  
Dallas Brooks Drive South Yarra  
Melway 44A12**

**RSVP: By 16 March to Dianne Reilly,  
Hon Secretary**

**Tel. 96462112 (please leave a message)**

### C J La Trobe Society/RHSV AGL Shaw Lecture 2010

**Tuesday 13 April 2010**

**6.00 - 8.00 p.m.**

The Annual C J La Trobe Society/Royal Historical Society A G L Shaw Lecture will be held at the RHSV's premises, 239 A'Beckett Street, Melbourne on Tuesday 13 April 2010.

Our guest speaker this year will be historian Bev Roberts, Drawing on much original material, Bev has recently published an excellent and very readable book, *Miss O and Miss N, an extraordinary partnership*, which reveals much about the life of women farmers on the Bellarine Peninsula from the 1840s. Contemporaries of La Trobe, Anne Drysdale and Caroline Newcomb established a successful pastoral business not far from the modern-day towns which bear their names. Bev Roberts will entertain and inform us about these two courageous Victorian pioneers and life in La Trobe's fledgling colony.

**Venue: Royal Historical Society of Victoria**

**239 A'Beckett Street Melbourne.**

**Refreshments provided**

**Cost: \$20.00 per person**

**RSVP: By 8 April to RHSV**

**Tel. 9326 9288**



**C J La Trobe Society Inc  
Annual General Meeting**

**August**

**Date and Venue to be advised.**

**Annual Pioneer Service St  
James' Old Cathedral  
Sunday 7 November 2010  
10.00 a.m.**

Reverend John Sugars, Vicar at St James' Old Cathedral, has once again invited all members of the La Trobe Society and their friends to the Annual Pioneer Service at 10.00 a.m. on Sunday 7 November 2010.

**Venue: St James' Old Cathedral**

**Corner King and Batman Streets West Melbourne**

**Morning Tea will be served.**

**RSVP by 3 November**

**Tel. 9329 0903**

**Christmas Cocktails for 2010  
Friday 3 December  
Time: 6.30 - 8.30 p.m.**

The annual cocktail party this year will be hosted by Alexandra Club member Loreen Chambers. The theme for the December issue of La Trobeana will focus on women and for this reason, the Alexandra Club will make an appropriately feminine setting.

**Speaker and cost to be advised.**

**Venue: Alexandra Club**

**81 Collins Street Melbourne**

**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>.

**Enquiries should be directed to**

The Honorary Secretary

The La Trobe Society

PO Box 65

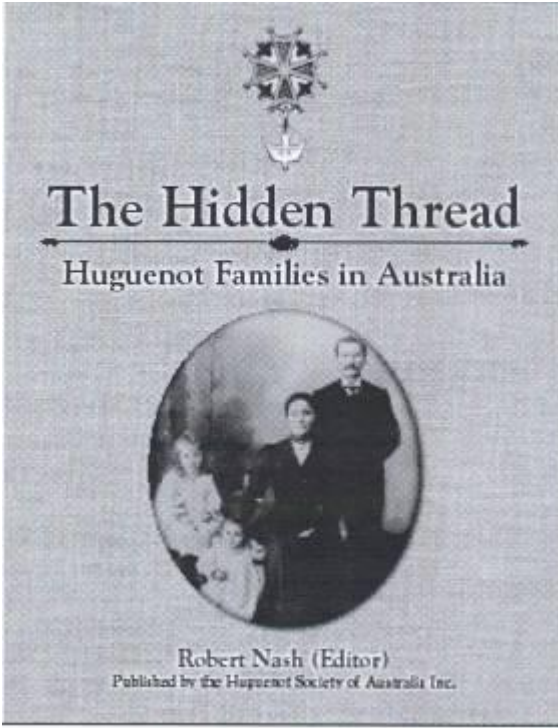
Port Melbourne, Vic 3207

Phone: 9646 2112

Email: [dmreilly@optusnet.com.au](mailto:dmreilly@optusnet.com.au)



# THE HIDDEN THREAD: Huguenot Families in Australia.



The Huguenot Society of Australia Inc. is happy to announce that its first book, *The Hidden Thread: Huguenot Families in Australia* is now available. This illustrated publication includes a list of almost 500 known Huguenot families who are represented in our country, along with their places of origin (where known), their first country of refuge, the dates of their arrival in Australia, and sources of information that verify their identity. The book also contains a wealth of other information:

- ❖ Introductory chapters explaining who the Huguenots were
- ❖ Chapters on individual families representing all six states (The **Belletts** of Tasmania; The **Barniers** of New South Wales; The **Lansells** of Victoria; The **Jonquays** of Queensland; The **Ferrys** of South Australia; and the **Lefroys** of Western Australia.)

- ❖ A section on eminent Huguenot Australians
- ❖ Maps showing the provinces of France and places of origin of Huguenot families
- ❖ A full bibliography with suggestions for further reading
- ❖ A full index

This is the very first book ever published on the subject of Huguenot descendants in Australia, and will prove useful, not only to individual researchers, but also as a vital reference work for family history societies and their members. If you wish to buy a copy, please fill in the strip at the bottom of this flyer and post it with a cheque/money order for \$50 (\$40 for the book + \$10 postage inside Australia) to us at: Huguenot Society of Australia Inc., P.O. Box 184, Newtown NSW.2042 For further details, contact us on [ozhug@ophlshome.com.au](mailto:ozhug@ophlshome.com.au)

Yes, I would like to buy .....copy/copies of *The Hidden Thread: Huguenot Families in Australia* .. at \$50 per copy (including postage). I enclose a cheque/money order for \$..... made out to **Huguenot Society of Australia Inc.**

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