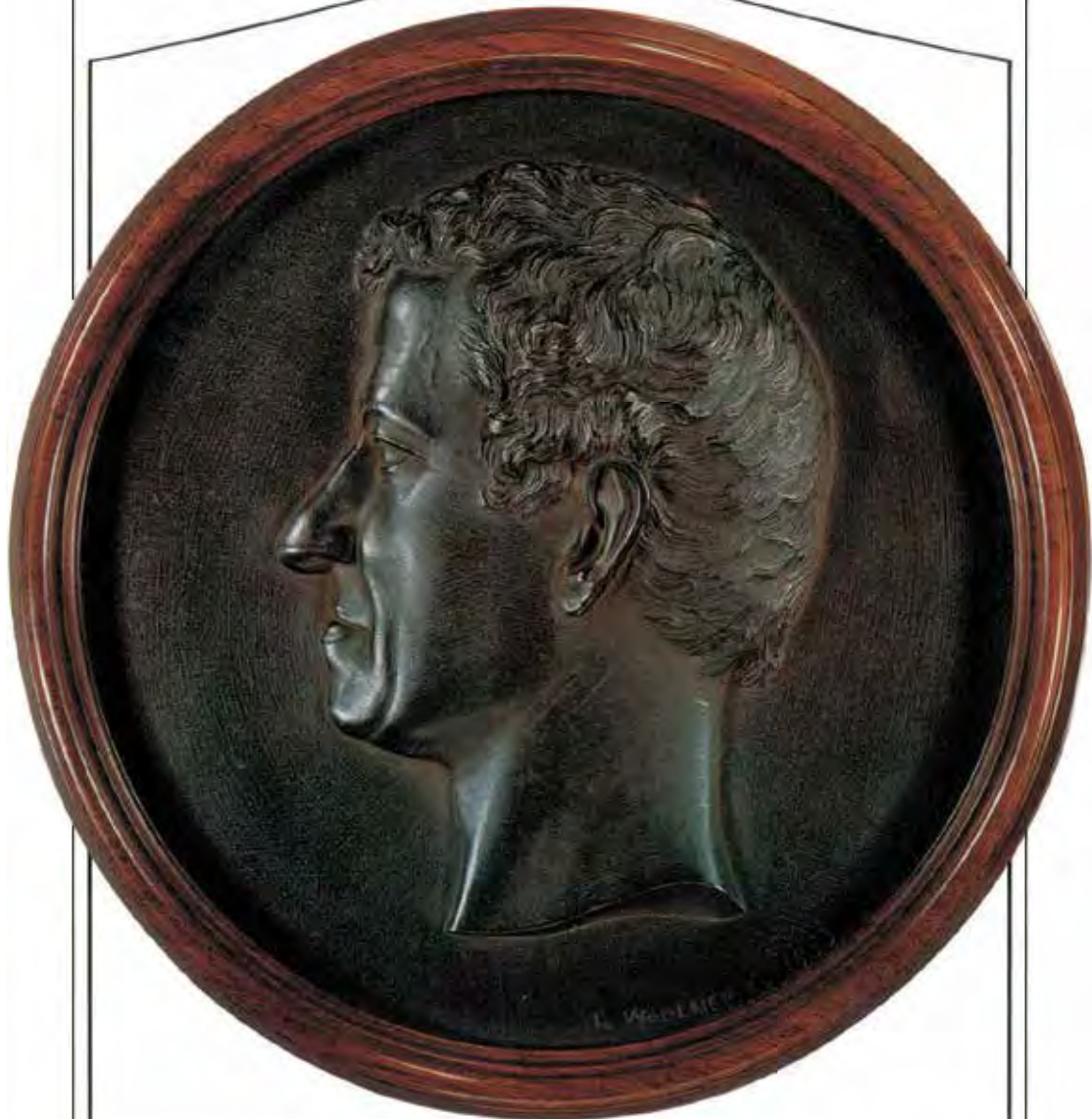


LA TROBEANA



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CONTENTS

Introduction

Articles

Pierre Latrobe	<i>The Patronymic: The Latrobe/La Trobe Family Name.</i>	02
Pierre & Janine Latrobe	<i>Looking for Ancestors: the origins of the Latrobe/La Trobe family.</i>	03
Dianne Reilly	<i>Charles Joseph La Trobe: the rambler in North America.</i>	08
Pamela La Trobe	<i>The story of an Australian La Trobe looking for Ancestors.</i>	20
Helen Armstrong	<i>Model of La Trobe's Cottage: a research report.</i>	23
Glenn R. Cooke	<i>Presentation Vase: a research report.</i>	25

Illustrations

18 & 19

Reports and Notices

C. J. La Trobe Society	31
Friends of La Trobe's Cottage	31
Forthcoming Events	33
Contributions welcome	34

Introduction

Sometimes, the *La Trobeana* editorial committee plans a theme to an issue, such as our one later on in the year when we will focus on women's lives in early colonial Melbourne. Indeed, we will also continue this theme when we have our Christmas Cocktails at the Alexandra Club where Dr Brenda Niall will speak on the friendship between Georgiana McCrae and the La Trobe family. As we are still in preparation for the December issue, we would also be delighted to receive any articles on this theme.

At other times, though, somehow a pattern emerges. This issue has a strong international theme in which, in our first main article, Pierre Latrobe and his wife Janine describe, as Pierre says: 'the great adventure of genealogy' in searching for his ancestral roots. The adventure took them to many places in France, and also introduced them to La Trobes in the United States of America, England and Australia. A delightful offering from Pamela La Trobe recounting her very personal story of her search for her husband's ancestors has also been included in this issue.

Dianne Reilly has given permission for me to include the lecture she gave, entitled 'Charles Joseph La Trobe – the Rambler in North America' at the Baltimore La Trobe International Symposium in April 2004, to which Pierre and Janine allude in their article.

There are two intriguing research reports in this issue. One is by Helen Armstrong, one of our guides at La Trobe's Cottage and C. J. La Trobe Society member, who began a small adventure of her own after coming upon an image of a model of the Cottage while surfing the internet. The other one is by Queensland Art Gallery Curator, Glenn R Cooke who reports on a magnificent presentation vase made in London in 1864.

We hope that those researchers who may not necessarily have a full size article to contribute to future *La Trobeana* issues will be emboldened to submit a research report of their own.

The C. J. La Trobe Society and Friends of La Trobe's Cottage, also, have exciting news of their own to bring to our attention.

Loreen Chambers

Editor

The patronymic: the latrobe/la trobe family name

By Pierre Latrobe

For many centuries, the inhabitants of that area south of Montauban on the borders of Languedoc near Guyenne and Gascogne spoke the 'langue d'oc', or the tongue or language of the Pays d'Oc. This musical way of speaking won literary recognition when the troubadours and poets used it as early as the 11th century. At one time in the 14th century, Dante even thought of writing his *Divine Comedy* in that language.

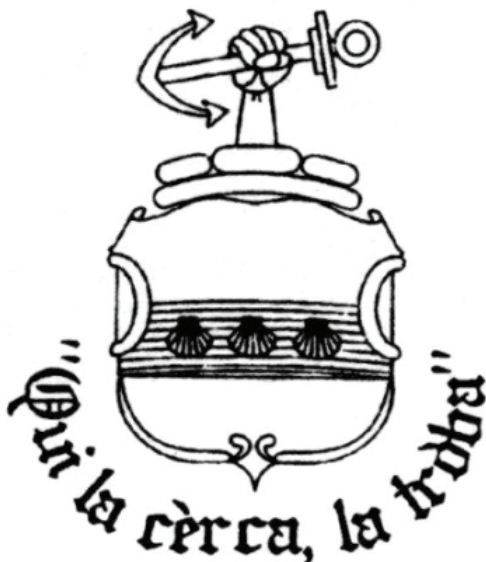
In the Occitan language, 'la troba' means 'he finds it'. There is some debate about the object of the search – could it have been the rhyme for a poem, a ballad, a melody? Then again, in those early days when family names were first becoming established, it may have indicated a man's profession. Perhaps a member of this particular family was a troubadour or ballad-singer, as the word *trobador* in Occitan signifies. Whatever the origin, the name has been passed down through the

generations of the Latrobe/La Trobe family.

In France, the family name is always spelled as one word: 'Latrobe'. The American branch of the family, descending from the great 19th century architect Benjamin Henry Latrobe, continues this French tradition of spelling the name as 'Latrobe'.

The Baltic branch, descended from John Frederic who was retrospectively knighted for his services by the Tsar after Napoleon's unsuccessful campaign in Russia in 1812, is called 'de La Trobe'. In Anglo-Saxon countries like England, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, the name was first spelled 'La Trobe' at the beginning of the 19th century. Charles Joseph La Trobe's aunt, Mary Agnes, married John Frederic Bateman, and by Royal warrant granted in 1883, combined their surnames to become the La Trobe Bateman family.

(Translated by Dianne Reilly)



The Latrobe Family Crest

Looking for ancestors: the origins of the Latrobe/la trobe family *Qui la cèrca la tròba:* *Who seeks will find*

By Pierre Latrobe and Janine Latrobe.

Pierre and Janine both gained their M.A. in English at Caen University. After graduating, they taught French in the U.K. for a year in a high school. Pierre was a foreign language assistant in Edinburgh University, Scotland, for another year. They both contributed to the book 'The Latrobes around the World' and translated most of the articles from English into French and from French into English.

Pierre was President of the Association Latrobe International Symposium (ALIS) from 1999 to 2004. He is now the Honorary President. Janine is the General Secretary of the Association. Pierre and Janine Latrobe live in Rouen, France.

Indeed the motto of the Latrobe/La Trobe family - *Who seeks will find* - proved right, but it took a great deal of time and effort to trace the origins of the family as far back as the 15th century, and to find the links uniting all its members.

I knew that my own name was uncommon, and I had neither seen any mention of it nor met anyone bearing it, apart from my close relatives. Consulting a dictionary of French family names, I found that Latrobe came from the Occitan, the original language of the south of France. In this language, the word *la troba* means 'discovery', and also 'poetical invention'; hence, the suggestion that it may have been a nickname for a 'troubadour', a ballad singer.



Fig. 1 Pierre Latrobe



Fig. 2 Janine Latrobe

In 1974, Captain Jacques Latrobe (now Colonel Latrobe) phoned me; he was stationed in Rouen at the time and, through a fellow officer, had heard of the existence of a Pierre Latrobe in the vicinity. He invited me and my wife to discuss genealogy with him. We were very impressed when he showed us an extensive family tree, and explained that all the Latrobes he had met so far were descended from a Protestant family living in Montauban and surroundings as early as the 15th century. He also told us that Jean Latrobe (later known as 'John the refugee'), born in 1670, had emigrated in 1688 to avoid the persecution against the Huguenots. His descendants are now scattered all over the world. He was the ancestor of Benjamin Henry Latrobe, the great American 19th century architect, and of Charles Joseph La Trobe, the first Lieutenant-Governor of the state of Victoria in Australia.

It was very exciting news, and I launched on the great adventure of genealogy by studying old registers in the Archives of Toulouse - a large city in the south of France - with the help of my father, my wife, and our two children. I knew that my father and grandfather had been born in Portet-sur-Garonne, a suburb of Toulouse, about forty miles from Montauban. In a short time, we found that all my forebears had lived in Portet since 1655, when a Jacques Latrobe was married there. Apparently there was no link with the other branches of the Latrobe family that Captain Latrobe had made known to me.

In 1990, I was surprised to receive a letter from Mrs Pamela La Trobe of South Australia, together with a huge family tree of the descendants of Jean (John) Latrobe who had left his native country in 1688 and settled in Ireland. She had visited the 1989 exhibition *La Trobe and His Circle* at the State Library of Victoria to mark the 150th anniversary of the arrival of Victoria's first Lieutenant-Governor, and she had then gathered whatever information she could in order to find the link between her husband's forbears and the great man. This led me to contact the main branch of the French Latrobes again. I met Bertrand Latrobe who showed

me the French family tree, and he passed on to me a copy of *The Genealogist* published in Melbourne in 1975. This included a useful article 'Genealogy of the La Trobe Family' by Donald Grant. He also showed me the ancient family book which had been written by his ancestor Jean-Joachim Latrobe. The latter lived from 1771 to 1832 and had taken part in the wars of the French Revolution and the Empire as a quartermaster. In 1822 he had met Christian Ignatius La Trobe (Charles Joseph's father) when he came to France with his son Peter. A few years later, I became acquainted with Maurice Latrobe of Versailles, who gave me a photocopy of this family book.

In 1994, I met other Latrobes, thanks to Bernard Kirchner and his wife Anne Latrobe Kirchner of Gif-sur-Yvette, a commune in the south-western suburbs about 23 kilometres from the centre of Paris. They were kind enough to invite my wife and me to their son's wedding. There, we made the acquaintance of Dr John Henry de La Trobe from Hamburg in Germany, who belonged to the Baltic branch of the family which was descended from John Frederic Latrobe, a brother of Benjamin Henry and Christian Ignatius. Dr de La Trobe had travelled all over the world on business, and had attended the 1989 La Trobe celebrations in Melbourne. He was an avid family historian who had documented the non-French branches of the Latrobe/La Trobe family extremely well.

Following discussions in Melbourne between Bernard and Anne Kirchner and Dianne and John Drury, the idea emerged of organising a seminar of all branches of the Latrobe/La Trobe family and interested historians. Preparatory meetings of members of the family in France and Dr John Henry de La Trobe eventually led to the scheme of organizing a Latrobe International Symposium to bring together the Latrobe/La Trobe descendants: those of 'John the refugee', and those of his brother Pierre, born in 1684, who had stayed in France and had been forced to serve in the Dragoons for 22 years because he would not give up his Protestant faith. It was Dr de La Trobe who suggested

that lectures on the famous men of the family should be included in the symposium. At one of the first meetings for the preparation of the Latrobe gathering, we had the pleasure of meeting Dianne Reilly Drury, who promised to deliver a lecture on Charles Joseph La Trobe.

On 8 October 1994, a picnic in the Kirchners' garden, near Paris, gathered 100 French members of the family, including 35 children. This was the foundation of our association named ALIS (Association Latrobe International Symposium) with the election of a Board of Directors. Maurice Latrobe, who is at the head of a large family, was the first President, and Bernard Kirchner the General Secretary.

Maité Chevalier, whose mother was a Latrobe, suggested that a book relating the family story should be written. A few cousins decided to join the committee, among them our son Jean-Patrick, who was an historian. Later on, my wife and I were invited to join as well when it was decided to publish a bilingual version in English and French, and we were needed for translations. All the relatives interested in the scheme were invited to write the story of their own branch, in France or abroad. Moreover, many documents concerning the most famous members of the family were included.

When the first Latrobe International Symposium (LIS) took place in Paris, Versailles and Montauban in May 1997, the lectures given on that occasion were to be reproduced in the book. The symposium began in the Australian Embassy in Paris. The numerous attendees were welcomed by the Australian Ambassador to France, His Excellency Mr John Spender. Dianne Reilly Drury, the official delegate of the State of Victoria, read a letter from His Excellency, Mr Richard E. McGarvie, the Governor of that State, and delivered her lecture on the role of Charles Joseph La Trobe in the development of Melbourne, and the creation of the colony of Victoria.

The reception that followed allowed cousins and historians who had come from the five continents to become acquainted in a convivial atmosphere. At last, we were able to meet Pamela La Trobe and her husband Ronald who had come all the way from Australia to be present. The next day at Versailles, there were 150 of us, and 104 delegates went on to Montauban in the following days when we visited historic sites connected with the family. These were Monbéqui, the birth-place of most Latrobes in the past, Villemur (where Pamela was decorated by the mayor for her extensive work on genealogy), and Varennes, where Michel Latrobe, Jean (John) and Pierre's father, had bought a house in 1675. The many descendants of 'John the refugee' were deeply moved to see the house from which their ancestor had left for exile in 1688.

From the early 1990s, Michel de Lafon-Boutary, an archivist who is connected to the main branch of the Latrobe family, had studied old records in the Montauban archives and informed us of his discoveries. Family members from abroad had contributed their genealogies, which helped us to publish a first version of the complete Latrobe genealogy for the inaugural LIS. To compile it, my wife Janine worked with Charles Hazlehurst Latrobe III of Baltimore, a descendant of Benjamin Henry Latrobe. The information provided by Pamela Latrobe was particularly helpful, and all the data was entered in French and English on computers with genealogical programmes. The book *The Latrobes around the World* was published one year later, in June 1998, illustrated with family portraits and photographs.



Fig. 3 Latrobe family members at a reunion in 1997 in front of the house of Jean Latrobe, the Refugee, in Varennes

At that time, the christening record of a Jacques Latrobe - a son of Bertrand who had married Anne Gasc in Montauban in 1584 and was a noted forebear of the main branch - had been found in the archives. I assumed that my ancestor Jacques Latrobe, who lived in the 17th century, was that son of Bertrand Latrobe. It was only in 2003 that Michel de Lafon-Boutary sent us a copy of a notary's deed which proved very important. It showed quite definitely that Jacques was not a son of Bertrand, but of his cousin Isaac, who was himself a son of Pierre Latrobe, a miller, born around 1530 in Monbéqui like the other Latrobes, and who had settled in the district of Gers in Gasconne. Another branch descended from this miller was recently discovered in that district. Through the mistake of a village clerk in 1854, the spelling of their name was changed from Latrobe to Latraube. The difference between the pronunciation of the two words is very slight in French. The oldest mention of the name Latrobe is in a record written in Latin in 1301. Unfortunately, there are no documents available to link that Johannes (John) Latroba to our forebears living in the middle of the 15th century.

Genealogy needs a great deal of patience. It is like a puzzle requiring perseverance, but which, in fact, is never fully completed. In my case, it had taken 28 years to find my actual roots. But, as the family motto says, *Qui la cerca la troba* - Who seeks will find!

After *The Latrobes around the World* was published, Bernard Kirchner decided to go deeper into the genealogy of the family. In 2004, with the help of Mr de Lafon-Boutary's research and Charles H. Latrobe III's contribution, a substantial book, *Genealogy of the Latrobe family from about 1300 to 2004*, was issued. Bernard also copied all the notaries' deeds concerning the family and translated them into English. A first version was presented at the 2001 La Trobe International Symposium which took place in London and Leeds, and it was issued in 2004 as 'Record of notary, parish and community archives concerning the Latrobe family'.

At the 2001 symposium in England, delegates visited the Moravian settlement of Fulneck, near Leeds, where Benjamin Henry Latrobe was born. In the Chelsea Moravian settlement in London, we saw the graves of Charles Joseph's mother, Hannah Benigna Syms, and of his grandfather, Benjamin Latrobe. His father, Christian Ignatius La Trobe, is buried in Fairfield where the future Lieutenant Governor of Victoria had attended the Moravian secondary school.

Meanwhile, a plaque had been laid in 2000 on the house at Varennes which Jean (John) Latrobe had left when he went into exile. I had been elected President of ALIS in 1999 but I asked Maurice Latrobe, Honorary President, to deliver a speech on the occasion of the visit, since it was the house that had belonged to his ancestors – including Jean-Joachim. Here is the text, engraved in French and English, on the plaque:

From this house which was bought by his father Michel, a Huguenot merchant of Villemur, in 1675, Jean Latrobe went into exile in 1688, three years after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. On May 10th, 1997, 104 Latrobe descendants from the five continents gathered there for the L.I.S. (Latrobe International Symposium.)

The next La Trobe International Symposium took place in America in April 2004 in Baltimore and Washington, and was mostly devoted to the life and works of Benjamin Henry Latrobe. Just as she had at the two previous symposia in France and in England, Dianne Reilly Drury delivered a lecture on Charles Joseph La Trobe's journey to America from 1832 to 1834.

The new President of ALIS, elected in October 2004, was Anne Latrobe-Kirchner. An informal Latrobe gathering took place near Moissac, France, in September 2007 and was very much appreciated by all the attendees. In October 2009, the fifteenth anniversary of ALIS, the general meeting led to the election of Bertrand Latrobe as President.

And so, the Association goes on. Thanks to it, and to the three symposia and the different family gatherings, strong links have been made between the different branches of the family across the world.

After completing the different family trees, statistics were compiled which show that there are at present about 250 persons in the world called Latrobe or La Trobe. They are to be found in the United Kingdom, Germany, North America, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, India and Japan, with only one quarter of them living in France. But it should be noted that a large number of Latrobe descendants now bear a different name because their mother or grandmother or another female ancestor was a Latrobe, La Trobe, or de La Trobe.

True to the Latrobe/La Trobe family motto – *Who seeks will find* – those who search for their ancestors find not only remnants of the past, but opportunities for the present, and links to the future.

Charles Joseph La Trobe: the Rambler in North America

By Dr Dianne Reilly

Text of a lecture given at the La Trobe International Symposium, Baltimore, April 2004.

Charles Joseph La Trobe, Superintendent of the British colony of Port Phillip and, subsequently, Lieutenant-Governor of the State of Victoria in the south-east of Australia from 1839 to 1854, was a nephew of the great American architect of the nineteenth century, Benjamin Henry Latrobe. The two never actually met, despite the fact that Charles Joseph spent more than two years from 1832-1834 touring much of North America and Mexico. By this time, Benjamin Henry had died, but Charles Joseph had the opportunity to meet several of his American cousins in Baltimore.

Charles Joseph had begun his career in Neuchâtel in Switzerland as tutor to the young aristocrat Albert de Pourtalès. In his leisure time, he rambled frequently in the Alps, becoming so talented a sportsman that he climbed mountains and difficult passes without the help of guides or porters. He wrote of his mountaineering exploits in his first book *The Alpenstock, or, Sketches of Swiss Scenery and Manners*, published in 1829 for an audience in England who would never be more than armchair travellers at home. Not only was he a travel writer, but he was also an artist of some talent, sketching and painting the scenery wherever he went.

La Trobe next travelled when he accompanied Albert de Pourtalès on a prolonged tour of North America and Mexico which began in the spring of 1832. La Trobe, at this stage, was thirty-one years old, and

Portalès nearly twenty. Portalès wished to follow the fashion of the day for those with education and wealth to travel in the 'New World'. His thirst for knowledge about North America was provoked on an occasion in 1827 when he saw six Osage Indians who had been brought to Geneva as a curiosity. For La Trobe, not only could he indulge his spirit of adventure by visiting an exciting and relatively unknown country, but it was also an opportunity for him to visit cousins whom he had never met.



Fig. 1 Albert Pourtalès and his father, Comte Frédéric de Pourtalès from a portrait by F. Krüger, Comte Frédéric de Pourtalès, with his sons Albert and Guillaume [1836]. Drawing. Archives de Neuchâtel, Switzerland

Charles Joseph's father was Christian Ignatius La Trobe, the elder brother of Benjamin Henry and son of Benjamin La Trobe. The brothers had been educated at Fulneck in Yorkshire, and later, at Herrnhut in Germany. Christian Ignatius was ordained as a minister of the Moravian Church, while Benjamin Henry began a career as a draughtsman leading him to design a number of notable country houses in England, such as Hammerwood House and Ashdown House, both in Sussex. After the tragic loss of his first wife, Lydia, Benjamin Henry immigrated to the United States in 1796. Following an illustrious career in architecture, Benjamin Henry died in 1820 of yellow fever contracted in New Orleans,¹ long before his nephew undertook his journey to America.

However, two of his sons, John Hazlehurst Boneval Latrobe, an eminent lawyer, investor and public servant, and Benjamin Henry Latrobe Jr, the pioneering engineer of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, lived in Baltimore at the time with their sisters, Lydia and Julia. This was a great opportunity to meet and spend time with family members of his own age with whom, to judge from their later correspondence, he had many interests in common. It was also an opportunity to introduce Albert to society 'good and polished beyond anything you would expect after reading Mrs. Trollope' [sic], as La Trobe assured the Count's mother.²



Fig. 2 Charles Joseph La Trobe, 1801-1875, artist. *Mill near Sleepy Hollow, 1833. Pencil and sepia wash. Collection: National Trust of Australia (Victoria). Deposited on long-term loan in the La Trobe Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria.*

La Trobe had set out from London in March 1832 with the intention of meeting Pourtalès in Paris to prepare for their tour. However, he found himself in quarantine at Calais for a week or more,³ due to the cholera plague raging in England. In fact, cholera and yellow fever posed threats to the two travellers on and off during their whole journey. By an extraordinary stroke of luck, they met the noted American writer, Washington Irving, as they were embarking at Havre-de-Grâce, now known as Le Havre, on the coast of France, in April of that same year.⁴ He was returning to America after a self-imposed exile of seventeen years in England and Spain, and to a large extent, this chance meeting determined their itinerary for the two young travellers. Washington Irving was the first native-born writer to have captured the imagination of the American people with his best-selling short stories *Rip Van Winkle* and *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* which appeared in his *Sketch Book* in 1819-20. A lawyer by profession, he spent a number of years in his family's Liverpool offices and undertook some minor diplomatic roles on behalf of the United States during his long sojourn in England. After his return to America, he published a number of major biographies, including those of Oliver Goldsmith and George Washington. Washington Irving was an excellent judge of character who summed up La Trobe's heritage, education, and experience of life, together with his favourite pursuits and his attitudes – in short, his strengths and weaknesses – in one succinct paragraph:

Another of my fellow-travellers was Mr. L..., an Englishman by birth, but descended from a foreign stock, and who had all the buoyancy and accommodating spirit of a native of the Continent. Having rambled over many countries, he had become, to a certain degree, a citizen of the world, easily adapting himself to every change. He was a man of a thousand occupations; a botanist, a geologist, a hunter of beetles and butterflies, a musical amateur, a sketcher of no mean pretensions, in short, a complete virtuoso; added to which, he



Fig. 3 Artist unknown. Washington Irving. From frontispiece of *The Alhambra*, New York, Thomas Crowell, 1891.

was a very indefatigable, if not always a very successful, sportsman. Never had a man more irons in the fire; and, consequently, never was a man more busy or more cheerful.⁵

He saw Charles Joseph as an Englishman, which he certainly was, but with an additional continental 'ingredient' which distinguished him from his fellow countrymen. He discerned the *dilettante*, the refined and discriminating man of taste, in La Trobe's interests in so many aspects of science and the arts, but he also recognised a certain irresolution or listlessness in the many 'irons in the fire' of this 'citizen of the world'. Nevertheless, Irving was charmed by the personable younger man's abilities, and by his geniality which underlay a serious approach to life. La Trobe was at a point in his life where he would soon be required to show his true mettle. As guide and mentor to the young Comte de Pourtalès, La Trobe would need all the strength of character and inbuilt wisdom he could muster to steer this spoiled and headstrong fellow away from the temptations of the freedom of the journey, and to form him into a resolute and reliable adult.

Despite La Trobe's declaration 'that nothing should tempt me into the manufacture of a book', the result of his prolonged absence from Europe was the publication of his third title, *The Rambler* in North America, which appeared in two volumes in 1835.⁶ The work is dedicated: 'To WASHINGTON IRVING, ESQ. These Volumes are Inscribed in Token of Affectionate Esteem and Remembrance by THE AUTHOR', thus denoting the impression the American had made on him and their mutual respect. Typically, La Trobe would have had clear plans for the itinerary of their tour, but he was receptive to diversions suggested by Irving:

The acquaintance which my comrade and myself had begun with Mr. Irving at Havre, and cemented on ship-board, was resumed ashore, and led to that series of common projects and common wanderings, which kept us bound together as a trio for the greater part of the summer and autumn of this year.⁷

Irving was welcomed home as a returning hero, and La Trobe was invited to the celebratory grand dinner given by the Mayor of New York. Unfortunately, Pourtalès, who had come down with measles before the ship docked, was absent. Later, La Trobe and Pourtalès travelled on alone to Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington, with excursions to Harper's Ferry and the Point of Rocks on the Potomac River, and to the Catskill Mountains via the Hudson River. La Trobe succinctly described the four major cities on the eastern seaboard as follows: 'New York is the most bustling; Philadelphia the most symmetrical; Baltimore the most picturesque; and Washington the most bewildering.'⁸ They also experienced the newly opened and much celebrated Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, designed by La Trobe's cousin, Benjamin Henry Latrobe Jr. La Trobe visited Chicago which he described graphically:



Fig. 4 Charles Joseph La Trobe, 1801-1875, artist. *Jefferson's Rock, Harper's Ferry, 1832.* Collection: National Trust of Australia (Victoria). Deposited on long-term loan in the La Trobe Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria.



Fig. 5 Charles Joseph La Trobe, 1801-1875, artist. *The Site of the City of Chicago, Michigan, 1832.* Pen and ink on paper. Collection: National Trust of Australia (Victoria). Deposited on long-term loan in the La Trobe Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria.

The little mushroom town is situated upon the verge of a perfectly level tract for the greater part consisting of prairie lands, at a point where a small river ... enters Lake Michigan ... We found the village crowded to excess.⁹

A little different from the Chicago of today, but at that time, it was about the same size as Melbourne in the south of Australia which was to greet La Trobe seven years later. La Trobe's sketch of the environs of Chicago in 1832, which is held in the State Library of Victoria's Picture Collection, is the earliest known contemporary sketch of the foundation of what was to become one of the largest cities in the United States. La Trobe and Pourtalès rejoined Irving in Boston, and the party headed north in order to avoid the dreaded cholera which was scourging different American cities in the south. La Trobe was always interested in any mountain range he saw, and he climbed Mt. Washington (1917m.) among other peaks in the

White Mountains of New Hampshire.¹⁰ It was at Saratoga Springs, where they were 'spending some days at a fashionable resort famed for its mineral waters',¹¹ that La Trobe sustained an accident which may have caused his later blindness. He described in a letter to Albert's mother the mishap they had while driving a horse-drawn vehicle:

As Albert and I were driving like two milors in a rumble-tumble vehicle towards Lake George, the machine was suffered to break down and the shape of my nose was suddenly changed from a nondescript, to a very decent Grecian one – besides my right eye [was] nearly cut out. The latter is not particularly a change for the better. Albert escaped without a scratch, as we were going at a snail's pace over a bridge & neither fell out, only my superior height brought me in contact with the head of the vehicle.¹²

Although he made light of the setback, such an injury must have caused him some inconvenience during his travels. It was obviously quite a serious one which, more than likely, had dire repercussions for his health in the future.

It was from Saratoga that La Trobe journeyed to view Niagara Falls. He recollected 'my juvenile weakness, that of being a notorious cascade-hunter. There was something in the motion of a waterfall which always made my brain spin with pleasure'.¹³ He had come to this part of the world with great curiosity, expecting to become familiar with scenery such as he had never seen. On first viewing the Niagara Falls, he was indeed awestruck by the incredible grandeur of the view:

Every surrounding object seems to be on a corresponding scale of magnificence...all combine to form a scene in which sublimity and picturesque beauty are enchantingly blended...I am Niagara mad.¹⁴

This sensibility demonstrated both his view of nature as a reflection of God, and his typical nineteenth century bourgeois appreciation of this 'wonder of the world'. La Trobe was responsive to the poetic elements of Washington Irving's world which he described during his visit in 1833:

We trailed Rip Van Winkle into the recesses of Kaats-Kill mountains – we now traced Ichabod Crane through his temptations and perils. We reconnoitred the little old Dutch farmhouses inhabited by the Van Tassels...sheltered from the busy world behind the heights of the Hudson. We dozed away a sultry hour in the shades of Sleepy Hollow...we further did not forget to linger near the little old Dutch church which still stands with its red roof, white walls, squat cupola and adverse weathercocks, above the little dell where the Headless Horseman wreaked his wrath on the sconce of Ichabod.¹⁵

Fate took another hand in the unfolding of the route taken by the two adventurers. La Trobe and Pourtalès temporarily abandoned their intention of going on to Canada in order to join Washington Irving and a new acquaintance – Judge Henry Leavitt Ellsworth, recently appointed by President Jackson as Commissioner for the Indians – on a 'Western tour' from St Louis through northern Missouri to Independence, then south to Kansas and Oklahoma.¹⁶ Ellsworth, a lawyer and politician from Hartford, Connecticut, was to go into the Indian Territory to assess the land west of the Mississippi River for Indian resettlement. Under the *Indian Removal Act* of 1830, all tribes living east of the river might be moved to the west of it,¹⁷ thus clearing the way

for occupation by white settlers. Ellsworth was to attempt to settle any disputes over land, make peace with the Indians and, in general, to have a calmativ effect on Indians and settlers alike.

Ellsworth, a humane man himself, was opposed to President Jackson's take-over of Indian territory. He found himself increasingly sympathetic to the plight of the tribes he had been sent to survey:

Politics are mixed up with the Indian question, and representations are made, often, on both sides for party effect – As for myself, I am far, very far, removed from all the scenes of political strife, and as my feelings become every day more and more interested in behalf of the Indians, my mind withdraws most willingly, from the heart burnings and reckless detractions of political conflict...¹⁸

The outcome of his mission was far from the recommendations in his report to Congress, and resulted in further more drastic encroachment of the white man into these lands. La Trobe was, therefore, present at the very commencement of the settlement of the Indian territory which was later named Oklahoma.

La Trobe was a serious thinker, added to which he was able to indulge his spirit of adventure on this North American tour. He and Pourtalès were invited to accompany Ellsworth on his official tour into the West as far as the frontier post at Fort Gibson on the Neosho River. This was an ideal opportunity for one as philosophical as La Trobe, to observe and comment upon the condition and treatment of the native American people. La Trobe had begun his journey to North America in a state of excitement based on curiosity about the 'New World' 'whose characteristics were so different from any I had yet seen'.¹⁹ His primary interest was in the scenery

where he hoped to find a combination of all that was picturesque and sublime. However, he was also keen to learn something of the New World's original inhabitants:

I longed to wander among the details of that sublime scenery which the fancy associates with the New World, as so peculiarly her own; her wide-spread streams – interminable forests and foaming cataracts; and to be a guest in the lodges of that race, of whom men speak as doomed speedily to disappear from the face of the earth.²⁰

In a chapter in the first volume of *The Rambler in North America*, La Trobe typically provided detailed historical information to inform his readers on the 'Settlement of the West'.²¹ He touched on the fact that the Indian population retreated before the inundation of white settlers moving west, and was full of commendation for 'the fine race of backwoodsmen, of whom Boone seems by common consent to have been considered the patriarch'.²² However, while admiring the fortitude of the immigrants in establishing themselves where they could guarantee their future, La Trobe deplored the effect of settlement on the Indigenous people. He was in a position to observe at first-hand the results of close contact with the white man and he did not like what he saw:

The gifts the pale-faces brought to the Children of the Forest have indeed been fatal ones, and by them the seeds of misery and death have been sown to a terrible extent...he excited the passions of the savage for his own purposes, and when it raged against him, he commenced the work of extermination.²³

Foreshadowing the situation he was later to encounter with the Aboriginal people in Australia, he expressed a deep sadness for what he saw as the

inevitable passing of the Indian people before the advance of progress:

But the evil is now done, and unfortunately irreparable...The Indian tribes have melted like snow from before the steady march of the white...If you ask, where is that noble race whom Smith found in Virginia...they are gone!²⁴

In the end, however, the demise of the Indians in the face of change seemed to be accepted by La Trobe. He considered that the white man and the Indian could never inhabit the same areas of land in North America, and he was convinced that 'If the Indian turns his back upon the alternative of civilisation, he must recede'.²⁵

The Ellsworth expedition proved an important feature in the documented history of Oklahoma, since Irving, La Trobe, Pourtalès and Ellsworth all kept journals which recorded the journey from four personal perspectives. La Trobe's was the most inclusive account of the tour, this well-trained observer recording in great detail the events as they happened and providing the most informative travelogue of places visited. It has been described as 'one of the classic pieces of the early literature of Oklahoma'.²⁶ La Trobe's romantic written descriptions reflected his attraction to natural features of the landscape, and these were very often accompanied by a pencil sketch of the same scene to enhance his memory of the event described. Washington Irving, in his journal, was full of admiration for La Trobe's wisdom and abilities, and appreciative of his vitality, whether he was fording a flooding river, driving bees from their hive to extract 'the rich booty', 'catching a mess of fish in a small brook', or killing a polecat.²⁷ Ellsworth described La Trobe's interest in botany in somewhat more detail than did Irving:

He always has a little bag slung to his coat button, to receive a new variety – from every kind of stalk and limb (not excepting the grasses) he makes a gathering, and the collection of months is thrown promiscuously together, to be sown in Europe – What a collection!²⁸

Writing to his mother from Independence, Missouri, on 26 September 1832, Pourtalès also mentioned his fellow-traveller's botanical activity: 'La Trobe has gathered more flowers here in a week than in the rest of America in five months.'²⁹ In his collecting, La Trobe revealed his fascination with the natural order and his passion for the identification of new species which would inform himself and scientists at home.

La Trobe had also to manage Pourtalès, an immature young aristocrat who was always on the look-out for any escapade or adventure. Ellsworth was disapproving of him and angered by his familiarity with local Indian tribes as the expedition passed through the West. He summed up his fear for the young man's 'future domestic felicity' which could be wrecked by 'the appearance of red progeny who will rise up to call him father.'³⁰

After leaving Irving and Ellsworth, the travels of La Trobe and Pourtalès in November and December 1832 took them via Arkansas down the Mississippi to New Orleans, before a bleak winter in Maryland. The pair arrived in Baltimore on Christmas Day. It was an ideal opportunity for La Trobe to become acquainted with his cousins. While there, Charles Joseph copied by hand into a notebook 'Extracts from my uncle Benjamin's private papers. Made in Baltimore. Winter 1833.'³¹ The first twenty-four pages of the notebook contain an account of Charles Joseph's grandfather, Benjamin, as recorded by his uncle, Benjamin Henry Latrobe. He wrote to his father:

On my visit to Lydia (my Uncle Benjamin's eldest daughter), I got out a bundle of papers and a memorandum in my late Uncle's hand writing, giving a much more detailed account of the La Trobe and Antes families than I had yet seen. Of course I copied it.³²

Other extracts which La Trobe copied from the private papers included anecdotes, poems, correspondence concerning schools and education, and descriptions of the American landscape.

It would be unlikely if Charles Joseph had not learned a great deal about the physical and philosophical composition of landscape painting from Benjamin Henry, the uncle he had never met. The elder Latrobe's famed *Essay on Landscape* encapsulated those artistic theories reflected in Charles Joseph's own works. This treatise was a book of instruction in landscape drawing which not only described various techniques in sketching, but also guided the prospective artist in an appreciation of the picturesque and sublime in nature. Such a book, which went into numerous editions and was surely available to Charles Joseph, produced in his art a discernible similarity to the watercolours of Benjamin Henry. The artistic talent of both uncle and nephew has produced a lasting record of the settlement and landscape of the United States and Australia.



Fig. 6 Charles Joseph La Trobe, 1801-1875, artist. *Quebec, St Lawrence from Montmorenci, 1833. Sepia wash on paper.* Collection: National Trust of Australia (Victoria). Deposited on long-term loan in the La Trobe Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria.

The respite in Baltimore fortified the two travellers for their long-planned tour of the southern states of America. Charles Joseph and his young *protégé* travelled to Norfolk in Virginia, and made a thorough journey of two months through Alabama, Georgia, South and North Carolina, and Tennessee before turning again to the north to Canada, to experience the sights and lifestyles of Quebec, Montreal and Ottawa.

Their next 'ramble' in January 1834 was to take them from New Orleans to Mexico where they spent three months, but that is another story, recounted in another book, *The Rambler in Mexico*, published in 1836.

His first encounter with the New World had a profound effect on La Trobe's sensibility. Here, he had discovered aspects of nature which he could never have imagined. He attempted to depict the vastness of the landscapes with their unexpected revelations of long-gone civilisations in his many sketches, and to describe them in his published narratives at the end of his journeys. It is apparent that La Trobe was forcibly struck by the grandeur of every feature of the landscape in both North America and Mexico, so dissimilar to the European scenery he knew so well. For him, as always when exposed to the marvels of nature, the magnificence of every new scene was an even stronger reflection of the glory of God, 'the great Creator of All'.³³

An important influence on La Trobe in the course of this journey was the cultivated company he kept. His relationship with the erudite and sophisticated Washington Irving influenced his attitudes and helped mature many of his ideas. The effect of Henry Ellsworth, a thoughtful and learned man whose compassion and circumspection were object lessons to La Trobe, was an influence which would later affect his attitude to the Aboriginal people of Port Phillip in Australia. He experienced Ellsworth's

deep concern for the native Americans, and yet, his practical attitude was that they could do nothing but recede before the onslaught of white migration. This was a profound lesson for La Trobe when he found himself administering a similar situation later on in Australia in line with the current Colonial Office policy of assimilation.

By July 1834, after enjoying a long period of freedom as travellers, La Trobe was back in England and Pourtalès had returned to Neuchâtel. While La Trobe had the responsibility of the young and undisciplined Comte de Pourtalès, he had also had the liberty to pursue his own interests of exploration, botanising, visiting his relations, and sketching and writing about the very different landscape he was experiencing. His travels so far, from the age of twenty-three when he was in Switzerland and other parts of Europe, to that of thirty-three and just returned from the New World, had resulted in a broadening of his life experiences and an enhancement of his already considerable education. The journeying had shown him as a resilient, resourceful and committed seeker after all that the world had to offer.

Now, La Trobe wrote to the Comtesse de Pourtalès that he was 'dreaming of a wife',³⁴ and it may have been she who suggested one of her unmarried cousins as the perfect solution. On a visit to Neuchâtel, he renewed his acquaintance with Sophie de Montmollin, the eighth of the thirteen children of Frédéric Auguste de Montmollin, a Swiss Councillor of State. La Trobe was later to describe Neuchâtel as a place where cousins 'swarm like herrings in every corner of the country'.³⁵ It is probable that La Trobe had met Sophie during the period that he had tutored Albert de Pourtalès. On meeting her again at her aunt's home, his agitation was apparent in his diary entry: 'I can think of n. but S'.³⁶ He wrote a few weeks later to his friend John Murray, the publisher, that 'In short, I am on the point of being married to one I have long loved and esteemed'.³⁷ The marriage took place at the British legation in Berne

on 16 September 1835. Their honeymoon was spent at 'Jolimont', situated on a hill outside Cerlier (Erlach) overlooking the scenic Lake of Bienné, not far from Neuchâtel. This property belonged to Comte Frédéric de Pourtalès, an uncle of the bride, and father of Albert, La Trobe's former student.

La Trobe was now a married man with all the responsibilities which accompany that state. He needed to provide for himself and his wife with more than just the proceeds from his books. In February 1837, he was offered a British government posting to carry out an assignment in the West Indies.

This was to be a great turning-point of La Trobe's adult life. At last, he was to become a trusted Government servant with meaningful paid employment in which he would demonstrate his aptitude in a responsible way. His commission was to inspect the schools in the British West Indies for which missionary bodies had received parliamentary financial grants in 1835-36, and to report back to the Colonial Office on progress made in educating the newly-liberated slaves.³⁸

La Trobe carried out his assignment in the West Indies in an exemplary fashion, the Colonial Secretary being so pleased with a job well done that La Trobe moved rapidly into a new position of far greater importance and responsibility. He was appointed as Superintendent of the Port Phillip District of New South Wales in far-off Australia.

La Trobe could have had little idea of what awaited him in his new assignment in Melbourne. He had to take with him all the requirements of daily life, including his own house which he named 'Jolimont' after the house in Switzerland where he and Sophie had honeymooned. Searching questions of race relations, separation from New South Wales and the cataclysmic impact of the gold discoveries of 1851-

52 awaited him there. The momentous events of the next fifteen years would change him totally from the youthful *dilettante* who, apart from one official appointment, had indulged his passion for rambling and suiting himself, to the care-worn Lieutenant-Governor who departed Australia in 1854.

Endnotes

- 1 *Dictionary of American Biography* (New York; Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961), 24.
- 2 MS 13354/44. La Trobe to Comtesse de Pourtalès, 26 January 1833. Fanny Trollope was the author of a recent book *Domestic Manners of the Americans*, London: Whittaker, Treacher & Co., 1832.
- 3 Charles Joseph La Trobe, *The Rambler in North America*, 1832-33, 2 vols. (London: Seeley and Burnside, 1835, I, 13-14).
- 4 According to the *Columbia Lippincott Gazetteer of the World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), II, the French Port of Le Havre was founded as Havre-de-Grâce in 1516 by Francis 1 near the Notre-Dame-de-Grâce Chapel of which only a façade remains today.
- 5 Washington Irving, *A Tour on the Prairies* (London: John Murray, 1835), 5.
- 6 Charles Joseph La Trobe, *Rambler in North America*, I, 8.
- 7 *Ibid.*, 25.
- 8 *Ibid.*, 26.
- 9 *Ibid.*, II, 204-5.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 56.
- 11 C.J. La Trobe to Comtesse de Pourtalès, Saratoga Springs, 19 August 1832. Fonds Petitpierre. Carton 18, dossier 45(c), Archives de l'Etat, Neuchâtel
- 12 *Ibid.*
- 13 Charles Joseph La Trobe, *Rambler in North America*, I, 72.

- 14 Ibid., 76-80
- 15 Ibid., II, 124-25
- 16 The Indian Territory was united with Oklahoma Territory to become the State of Oklahoma in November 1907.
- 17 Gary B. Nash and Julie Roy Jeffrey, *The American People* (New York: Harper Collins, 1994), 395.
- 18 Henry Leavitt Ellsworth, *Washington Irving on the Prairie, or a Narrative of a Tour of the Southwest in the year 1832*. New York: American Book Company, 1937, 61.
- 19 Charles Joseph La Trobe, *The Rambler in North America*, I, 6.
- 20 Ibid.
- 21 Ibid., 83-98.
- 22 Ibid., 98.
- 23 Ibid., 164-65.
- 24 Ibid., 166-67.
- 25 Ibid.
- 26 Charles Joseph La Trobe, *The Rambler in Oklahoma: La Trobe's Tour with Washington Irving*, ed. Muriel H. Wright and George H. Shirk, Oklahoma City, Harlow, 1955, vii.
- 27 Washington Irving, *Journals and Notebooks*, vol. V, 1832-1859. Boston: Twayne, 1986, 114-145 passim.
- 28 Ellsworth, 69.
- 29 Albert de Pourtalès to Comtesse de Pourtalès, Independence, Missouri, 26 September 1832. Fonds Petitpierre. Carton 18, Dossier 45(c), Archives de l'Etat, Neuchâtel.
- 30 Ellsworth, 67.
- 31 MS 13003. Notebooks of La Trobe's grandfather, copied by him in Baltimore in 1833. La Trobe Archive, La Trobe Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria.
- 32 Charles Joseph La Trobe to Christian Ignatius La Trobe, January 1833. In the private collection of John Henry de La Trobe, Hamburg, Germany.
- 33 Charles Joseph La Trobe, *The Rambler in North America*, I, 37.
- 34 Charles Joseph La Trobe, Fairfield, to the Comtesse de Pourtalès, Berlin, 8 August 1834. Fonds Petitpierre. Carton 43, Dossier 45(b). Archives de l'Etat, Neuchâtel.
- 35 Charles Joseph La Trobe to Agnes La Trobe, 30 August 1851. Fonds Petitpierre. Carton 17, Dossier 22(b). Archives de l'Etat, Neuchâtel.
- 36 Charles Joseph La Trobe, Private Memoranda, 25 June 1835.
- 37 Charles Joseph La Trobe to John Murray, 1 September 1835. John Murray Archive, London.
- 38 Great Britain, Colonial Office, Reports on *Negro Education, Jamaica*, 1837-38, House of Commons, XLVIII, 611ff, no. 113, 3.

FRIENDS OF LA TROBE'S COTTAGE



The newly painted blue shutters gleam on La Trobe's Cottage. This work was part of a package funded by a \$60,000.00 grant from the Federal Stimulus package given to the National Trust. The blue colour was reinstated based on Gilbert's illustration. Other works included replacement of rotted timber, general external painting and reinstatement of part of La Trobe's dowelled picket fence.



La Trobe's Medicine Chest on display at La Trobe's cottage.

The last issue of *La Trobeana* (Vol. 9, No. 1, February 2010) contained an article on the medicine chest written by Dr. John Dwyer, Q.C. This article has generated a great deal of interest in the medicine chest.



George Alexander Gilbert. *A View of Jolimont, Melbourne, Port Phillip 1843-1844.*
La Trobe Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria.

This illustration provided evidence for the reinstatement of the blue colour on the shutters.



The Friends arranged a Mothers Day event on 9 May this year to celebrate Sophie La Trobe's role as a wife and mother. Nelly La Trobe (Cassandra Collier) listens in as Sophie (Frederique Fouche) reads from letters she wrote to Agnes who had been sent back to Switzerland to be educated by her grandmother.



The Governor's Return: Captain Lonsdale will again escort Governor and Mrs La Trobe back to their refurbished cottage on Saturday 3 October at 2 p.m. He will be greeted John Pascoe Fawkner.

The story of an Australian La Trobe looking for Ancestors.

By Pamela La Trobe

At Dianne Reilly's request, Pamela La Trobe, who lives in Elizabeth, South Australia wrote us the story of how it was that she came to develop her interest in the genealogy of her husband's family, which in turn led her, the daughter of a £10 English migrant to go to Villemur, France to receive a medal of honour from the mayor for her services to genealogy.

In the history of the La Trobe family, I am a very small cog but I am very proud of the part I have played. I started my work life at the tender age of fifteen as a shop assistant in Myers, Adelaide. After one year, I changed my status to that of a clerical assistant at EMI Electronics in Salisbury. This was so much closer to home and I loved every minute of my time in this work place. It was here that I learnt the skills of filing, cataloguing, printing and all the requisite knowledge needed to help me later in life with genealogy, although I did not know this at the time. While I was in this job I became aware of the draughtsmen and women and what they did; it looked very interesting. I asked my boss if I could have a go, I had found my vocation in life! From the very first day, my boss hired me as a tracer and then I progressed through the years as a draughtswoman (without any formal training).

It was while I was working at EMI that a young man started work as a trainee draughtsman; I had met Ronald La Trobe. We were married within a year. Ron was going to night school to get his certificate and used to get a lot of homework. In the endeavour to have more time together we split his homework up, Ron did all the written work and I did all the drawings. I am pleased to say that my part of this got a distinction! Once again, this helped me to learn more skills for my genealogy work, as yet still to come.

I retired from work in 1974 to have our first child, Robert, and in 1975 our daughter Sharon was born. With our young family, we had many camping holidays: one of these holidays took us to Melbourne in September 1989. There was at this time a celebration for Charles Joseph La Trobe¹ of which we were unaware. We, of course, did all the La Trobe tourist sites. At La Trobe's Cottage, Ron went to sign the visitors' book and the guide at the time asked us if we had enjoyed ourselves, and also told Ron that he had the La Trobe 'nose'. Ron had great pleasure in telling him that it was a family trait. The curator then checked Ron's signature in the book and realised



Pamela La Trobe

he had a La Trobe in his midst. With this we had a wonderful grand tour with our own personal guide! It was in consequence of this trip that I got the first inkling of doing the family genealogy. Returning from this holiday, I told my father-in-law, Edward Essex La Trobe, who was a very upright, proper and very proud La Trobe man, that I was thinking of doing his family's genealogy, something he had been asking me to do for years. He was 'over the moon' and, before I left his home that day, I had everything he had managed to collect over the years on the family. It wasn't a lot but it was a starting point. At this stage, I thought it wouldn't take very long to fulfil this task, as my father-in-law was always under the impression that his sons, Ron and David, were the last in the La Trobe line. How naïve was I! This small idea of mine to please him and give me something to do for a few months became an all-consuming, obsessive passion for the next ten years.

I began this mammoth task without a computer or a typewriter, and very little knowledge of how to achieve my goal. I did, however, have stubbornness and will power. I started by writing, yes, writing to all the La Trobes/Latobes I could find in any phone books and electoral rolls that were available to me at the local library, and then later on, at the small genealogical society in Adelaide and the Adelaide Library. There were hundreds of letters with very few replies but the replies I got were very helpful and led me, of course, onto more information and channels to investigate.

I compiled my first batch of information into a respectable family tree chart, all done on the kitchen table with paper, pencil, ruler and a very well-used eraser. All information I received was double checked and then put into my information charts. I should mention that in 1977 I had a cranial aneurism that ruptured. Through this I lost my short term memory; therefore, my retentive powers for new information had to be on paper or it was forgotten.

After a year of this obsession, Ron made my life a lot easier by giving me an electric typewriter for Christmas. It was pure bliss to get everything done on this wonderful piece of equipment.

With more information coming in all the time through correspondence and research, the chart was growing to a rather large size. It was on my dining room wall for at least eight years while I worked on it and it became quite a conversation piece with all our visitors!

I corresponded a lot with Pierre and Janine Latrobe in France² who were a wealth of information on the family. Pierre and Janine and other interested family members organised the first Latrobe/La Trobe International Symposium in May 1997. It was on 7 May, 1997 that Ron and I arrived at the De Gaulle airport to meet our extended family. We had a wonderful week of meeting them and learning the family history, as well as seeing some local historical sites. The highlight of this tour for Ron was when I was presented with the medal of honour from the mayor of Villemur³ for my work in Latrobe/La Trobe genealogy. I was extremely proud to receive this honour, but I have to admit that I personally thought that there were more deserving candidates.

On our return to Australia, I decided to leave the genealogy to the younger La Trobes. My father-in-law was happy for me to do this and was delighted that I had received the medal. I had accomplished what I had set out to do which was to make Edward Essex La Trobe realise his dream of a genealogical chart of his full family. Edward (Ted) passed away on 21 June, 2002. Winifred, his wife, followed him on 29 June, 2009. Both were sad losses to me. Unfortunately, my husband Ron also passed away - this was on 13 December, 2003. He was my rock and I miss him terribly. Thank goodness for my five grandchildren from my daughter Sharon and her husband Tony.

I do not have La Trobe blood running through my veins but I consider myself a true La Trobe and a very proud one.

Our relationship to Charles Joseph La Trobe is a distant one. Charles Joseph's great grandfather was James through his first marriage to Elizabeth Thornton. James' second marriage to Rebecca Adams is the link to my husband Ron's lineage, which makes Ron the great, great, great, great grandson of James and Rebecca Latrobe.

I hope you have enjoyed reading about my part in this great family. Be warned though, genealogy can absorb you completely and at times it can take over your life. I know because I've been there. Oh, what a privilege!

Endnotes

- ¹ La Trobe and His Circle, an exhibition to mark the 150th anniversary of the arrival of Victoria's first Lieutenant-Governor, held at the State Library from 4 October to 18 November, 1989.
- ² See the articles by Pierre and Janine Latrobe in this issue of La Trobeana.
- ³ Villemur-sur-Tarn, a village near Montauban in southern of France, was the birth-place of Jean Latrobe, 'the Emigrant', who fled from France at the time of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685.

Model of La Trobe's Cottage: a research report

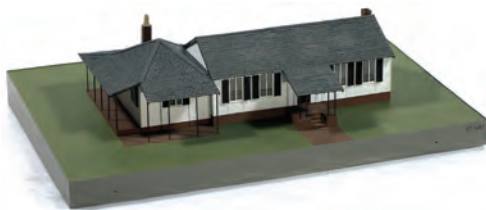
By Helen Armstrong

Helen Armstrong is a Volunteer Guide at La Trobe's Cottage and a committee member of the C J La Trobe Society and of the Friends of La Trobe's Cottage. Since her retirement from the University of Melbourne Library, where she worked as a selection librarian in Collection Management and subsequently as the Economics and Commerce Librarian, she has been guiding at various National Trust properties and at Beleura-House-Garden in Mornington. She is also a member of the volunteer team at the Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery and a foundation member of the Australian Decorative and Fine Arts Society Mornington Peninsula.

Recently, when seeking information on prefabricated houses, an interesting item in the collection of Museum Victoria came to light:

'Model of La Trobe's cottage, built 1839. ... The model was made by John Cherrey in 1989. It was donated to Museum Victoria for its exhibition 'Home Sweet Home: Changes in Victorian Domestic Architecture 1839-1989' in 1989.'

The Home Sweet Home exhibition was organized by the Museum in association with the state chapter of the Australian Institute of Architects. The committee



John Cherrey. Model of La Trobe's cottage, built 1839. Constructed in 1989.

who curated the exhibition celebrating the history and dynamics of our domestic architecture were: Dimity Reed, Alan Powell, Janet Bruce, Philip Goad et al, assisted by Elizabeth Willis from the Museum.² The exhibition ran from 20 November 1989 to 11 February 1990.

Forty-four immaculate models were donated for the exhibition by more than forty architectural firms. At the time, the total value of models was estimated to have been \$500,000 (the same cost of three life-size A V Jennings homes of the day).³

The models were made to a scale of 1 to 50 and each took between 80 to 200 hours to make. Thirty of them are in the Museum's collection. They represented houses ranging from La Trobe's Cottage; notable single dwellings of many leading architects; through to examples at Garden City in Fishermen's Bend, Stanhill Flats in Albert Park, Operation Snail houses (see below) and public housing of the 1980s in Chadstone.

John Cherrey, who was then a final-year student at RMIT and experienced in furniture making and other arts and crafts, made four models for the exhibition. The model of the Cottage was made using HIPS (high impact polystyrene sheet) and automotive paint and it took more than 100 hours to make. He recalls the roof shingles as being a particular challenge. The firm of Hassell sponsored this model, depicting the Manning's (of London) prefabricated two original panelled rooms, plus the locally built dining room. Hassell then donated the model to the Museum.

Celebrated as one of Melbourne's oldest buildings, La Trobe's Cottage is typical of the modest beginnings of house building in the early years of European settlement in Victoria. Prefabrication provided an ideal solution for these housing needs, as it had also for William Lonsdale two years previously.⁴

More than 100 years later, from 1949, Operation Snail - a joint project between the Immigration Department, railways and public housing - shipped out thousands of prefabricated houses from England. The houses were used for accommodating large numbers of incoming migrant workers on railway and electricity projects. Charles Joseph La Trobe, of course, not only had to bring his own prefabricated dwelling, but purchase it himself.

It is hoped that the model of La Trobe's Cottage may be exhibited again some time in the future.

Endnotes

The author acknowledges the assistance of John Cherrey (Senior Lecturer, School of Architecture and Design, RMIT University) and Dr Charlotte Smith (Senior Curator, Public and Institutional Life, Museum Victoria) in writing this article.

¹ 'Architectural Model - La Trobe's Cottage, Jolimont, 1839'. <http://museumvictoria.com.au/collections/>

Note that the model depicts the Cottage as it was reconstructed in The Domain in 1964.

² 'Home Sweet Home', prepared with assistance of Philip Goad, Trust News, 18, no. 11, 1990, pp. 10-11.

³ Bock, Andrew. 'Home Sweet Home', The Age, 28 November 1989, p.23.

⁴ Lewis, Miles. 'Jolimont in Context', La Trobeana, 9, no. 1, 2010, pp. 3-5.

A presentation vase: a research report.

By Glenn R. Cooke

The Queensland Art Gallery has recently acquired a magnificent Presentation Vase which possibly once belonged to Victoria's first Lieutenant Governor. The Gallery's Research Curator, Queensland Heritage, Mr Glenn R Cooke, has very kindly provided the following report of what is known so far of the provenance of this finely-crafted silver vase.

Glenn R. Cooke was appointed the first Curator of Decorative Arts at the Queensland Art Gallery in 1981. Glenn has a Bachelor of Arts from Melbourne University (1977) and a Master in Arts from the George Washington University (1979).

His work includes publications such as L. J. Harvey and his school (1982), Carl McConnell: master potter (1986), Thorns and petals (1988), A time remembered: art in Brisbane 1950 to 1975 (1995), Art off centre (1997), Art prize exhibitions in Brisbane 1950-1975 (1998), Lady woodcarvers of Rockhampton (2000) and Tropical Pleasures (2004). He has also written numerous articles on the visual arts especially relating to Queensland.

His commitment to documenting Queensland's visual art history was recognised in 1999 when he was appointed Research Curator, Queensland Heritage.

HUNT & ROSKELL
England 1843-97

PRESENTATION VASE, 1864

Sterling Silver cast and chased.

Purchased 2009 with funds through the Queensland Art Gallery Foundation 30th Anniversary Appeal.

This magnificent 'Presentation Vase' is the most important example of Victorian silver in the Queensland Art Gallery's collection. Its elaborate decoration is unlike anything produced in the Australian colonies, though the beautifully cast and chased kangaroos and an emu (as well as a camel) around the base suggest that it was commissioned with an Australian connection in mind.

The legendary Regency silversmith, Paul Storr, established his workshop in London in 1819. Under changes of style, Storr and Mortimer (1822-38), Mortimer and Hunt (1839-43), it became Hunt and Roskell from 1843 surviving until 1965. The exceptional level of skill that established Storr's



Fig. 1 For Hunt & Roskell, England b.1843 d.1897, artist. Presentation vase, 1864. Sterling silver, cast and chased, with silver-plated insert. 53 x 42cm (diam.); weight: 10.1kg. Acc 2009.150a-b.

fame was also continued in these businesses, which became exemplary makers of silver in high Victorian taste.

This Vase belongs to a group of similar major presentation pieces that exhibit openwork decoration in the form of vine branch, leaf and fruit. They mainly date from the second and third quarters of the 19th century and are usually linked to J. S. Hunt or Hunt and Roskell. A good example is *The Cooper Vase* 1853 in the collection of the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney, which still has its original ruby liner and separate electroplate insert.

When *The Cooper Vase* was shown in Sydney in 1854, it was considered 'the most beautiful specimen of silversmith's work ever seen in the colony' (*The Illustrated Sydney News*, 22 April 1854). The highly elaborate naturalistic decoration of interwoven vine branches, fruit and leaves was unlike anything seen in the Australian colonies before — the integral ruby-glass liner emphasised the silver lattice effect. Nothing as sophisticated and elaborate as this piece was ever produced in the Australian colonies.

The decoration is a mixture of naturalism and rococo-revival and very indicative of high Victorian taste in England. Naturalism, in the replication of the form and colour of the natural world, has been a strong element in English decorative arts from the 18th century.

The taste for French inspired styles was also evident in 18th century England in the admiration for the Louis XV style and the products of the Sèvres Factory. The French Revolution at the end of the century had seen the wholesale disposal of aristocratic collections in auctions, which found enthusiastic buyers in England. This in turn sparked a renewed interest in earlier French styles.

The taste for the 'new' rococo style was one of the many design elements that threaded through 19th century England and, by the middle of the century, a fully blown rococo-revival style was evident in the decoration of furniture, porcelain and, especially, silverware. It is particularly obvious in the elaborate and irregular scrolling of the base of the *Presentation Vase*.

In the post World War Two period, the simplification of Scandinavian furniture and decorative arts which dominated taste also saw a devaluation of the high Victorian period, the products of which were seen as needlessly elaborate. However, in recent decades the



Fig. 2 Detail of the kangaroos.



Fig. 3 Detail of the emu.

appreciation of Victorian painting and refurbishing of period settings has led to a deeper understanding of the complexities and rich panoply of design elements that characterised the period. Apart from the superb craftsmanship evidenced in this *Presentation Vase*, such pieces speak eloquently of the value given to public service during the time of the British Empire.

Of particular interest in this Vase is the presence of two kangaroos and an emu (as well as a camel) around the base. As the holes through which the animals are bolted onto the base match up exactly, and each animal is separately marked for J. S. Hunt, we may safely assume the animals are original to this *Vase*. This makes it very unusual in the Hunt and Roskell *oeuvre* and strongly suggests that it was commissioned or made with an Australian connection in mind.

When this work appeared at auction at Sotheby's New York on 26 April 1985, the catalogue entry stated that it was from an 'ambassadorial collection' and was believed to have been presented to Charles Joseph La Trobe, who had been Lieutenant Governor of Victoria from 1851-1854, before returning to England. In 1864, La Trobe was awarded a government pension, and it is entirely possible that such a piece could have been presented at this time. Unfortunately, the identifying inscription has been removed.

The only additional identifying mark is 'Bredalbane 1877'. Although there are Bredalbane townships in New South Wales, Queensland and Tasmania, Jolyon Warwick-James, a noted silver historian, has suggested that the inscription alludes to Gavin Campbell (1851-1922), 7th Earl of Bredalbane, who assumed his title in 1871. La Trobe died in 1875, whereupon his widow moved to Switzerland in 1876 which is a consistent date for an acquisition by Lord Bredalbane. This cannot be confirmed, unfortunately, as the main Bredalbane inventory was

produced in 1863 and the account books of Hunt and Roskell have not survived. However, as Warwick-James points out, removing an inscription from a presentation piece was a common practice, as it also removed any suggestion of financial difficulty for the owner.

Peter Corlett, OAM

Members of the La Trobe Society will be delighted to learn that one of our fellow members, Peter Corlett, was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in this year's Queen's Birthday Honours List 'for service to the visual arts as a sculptor'.



Fig. 1 Peter Corlett, OAM.
Photographer: Susan Gordon-Brown.

The honour is so richly deserved by this modest artist who has contributed so many fine works to the Australian and international artistic landscape. His portrait in bronze of Charles Joseph La Trobe, commissioned by the La Trobe Society and unveiled by our patron, the Governor, Professor David de Kretser, on the forecourt of the State Library of Victoria in November 2006, is one of his finest works.

Peter studied sculpture at RMIT University, Melbourne, from 1961 to 1964. In 1975, he was awarded a special projects grant from the Visual Arts Board of the Australia Council. Between 1977 and 1980, he was artist in residence at Exeter University and Exeter College of Art in the United Kingdom.

Peter is known for his full-figure sculptures cast in bronze, especially his memorial works. In 1987, Peter Corlett won a competition to create a memorial 'to commemorate the courage and compassion' of John Simpson Kirkpatrick, a stretcher bearer during the Gallipoli Campaign in World War I. The result was a full size bronze sculpture, *Simpson and his donkey*, 1915, which now stands outside the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.



Fig. 2 Peter Corlett, Charles Joseph La Trobe, bronze,
State Library of Victoria collection.
Photographer: Susan Gordon-Brown.



Fig. 3 *Cobbers* (1998)

His *Cobbers* is a full-size bronze sculpture created in 1998 for the V.C. Corner at the Australian Cemetery and Memorial near Fromelles in northern France. It depicts Sergeant Simon Fraser, a stretcher bearer with the 57th Battalion, rescuing a wounded compatriot from no man's land after the Battle of Fromelles (1916). The title comes from a letter that Fraser, a farmer from Byaduk, Victoria, wrote a few days after the battle which was widely quoted in CEW Bean's *The Australian Imperial Force in France, 1916* (p. 441 published in 1929 as volume 3 of *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918*. In it, Fraser describes how one wounded soldier shouted out "Don't forget me, cobber" as he was helping another. Fraser went to get more stretcher bearers, and both wounded soldiers were rescued. A replica of the sculpture is near the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne.

Peter's other memorial works include:

- *The Bullecourt Digger*, Bullecourt, France, 1993.
- *Memorial to the Australian Light Horse*, Be'er Sheva, Israel, 2008.
- *The man in the mud*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1989.
- *Sir Edward "Weary" Dunlop*, Melbourne and Canberra, 1995.
- *They also served, (Two WRANS 1941–1985)*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra.



Fig. 4 *Edward "Weary" Dunlop*, Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne and at Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory.



Fig. 5 *Simpson and his donkey*, 1915. (1987–88)



Fig. 6 *Dame Nellie Melba, Waterfront City.*

Peter Corlett has also created several sculptures of famous people associated with his native Melbourne, such as four Victorian Premiers (Treasury Place, Melbourne), John Farnham, Kylie Minogue and Dame Nellie Melba. Several of these can be seen at Waterfront City in the Melbourne Docklands.

Peter Corlett is a leading Australian figurative sculptor. In the past 20 years he has completed over 30 major public sculpture commissions. Best known for his full-figure portrait sculptures cast in bronze, his earlier abstract works and 'supra-realist' works of the 1960's - early 1980's in concrete and fibre-glass are also found in local and overseas galleries and private collections. To date, the only book-length study of Peter Corlett's work is *Peter Corlett: sculptures* by Patrick Hutchings (Geelong: Deakin University Press, 1992).

Peter's work, whether the *Casterton Kelpie*, *Phar Lap* (Flemington 1988), *Simpson and his Donkey*, or supernaturals such as *Pegasus* and *Fortuna* (Melbourne), and his human subjects, is inspired by his grasping for the mythic archetype. His creative struggle is aided by technical skill gained over many years and by collaboration with Meridian Sculpture Founders, Fitzroy, in Melbourne.

Dianne Reilly



Fig. 7 *Kylie Minogue, Waterfront City*

C J La Trobe Society Inc. Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 11 August, 2010

The Lyceum Club

Ridgway Place, Melbourne.

The Society's AGM was held on 11 August, 2010. After the meeting guest speaker Richard Heathcote, Director, Carrick Hill Museum in South Australia, spoke about 'Charles Joseph La Trobe and the English Country House'. The meeting was followed by dinner, hosted by Club Member, Dianne Reilly.

New Society Web Site

Those keen web surfers amongst you will no doubt have discovered the bright new C J La Trobe Society web site. The fresh look and more information will make this a must see site for news and information about La Trobe and the society. It is in the same place – www.latrobesociety.org.au

We plan to develop the pages about La Trobe to provide an authoritative source of information about La Trobe and things related. The site will also have up-to-date details of future events, so will provide a useful reference – put a link in your favourites in your web browser.

A web site for the Friends of La Trobe's Cottage has also been launched. See it at www.latrobesociety.org.au/foltc or click the top right link on the latrobesociety web pages.



John Botham

C J La Trobe Society Webmaster

Friends of La Trobe's Cottage

New Blue Shutters

We would encourage La Trobe Society members, if they are strolling in the Royal Botanic Gardens or the Kings Domain, to take a look at the newly painted Cottage. We are thrilled with the gleaming paintwork and blue shutters, which recall the 1843/44 pastel drawing by La Trobe's friend, George Alexander Gilbert.

(See centre pages for illustrations.)

Roof Appeal

C J La Trobe Society members will have received information about the La Trobe's Cottage Roof Appeal. The Federal Grant awarded to the National Trust for works at the Cottage has funded the repair and painting of the Cottage, and a section of the fence will soon be replaced. However, there were insufficient funds to repair the roof. The shingles, which were fitted when the Cottage opened in the King's Domain in 1964, now urgently need replacing, and we are supporting the National Trust in its appeal for funds to

enable this project to get underway. For information about this appeal, please contact John Drury, Treasurer, Friends of La Trobe's Cottage, or visit the Friends' website at – www.latrobesociety.org.au/foltc

The Governor's Return

We are pleased to announce that Governor La Trobe will be returning to his newly refurbished Cottage on Saturday 3 October at 2 p.m. He will be escorted by Captain Lonsdale, and accompanied by his wife Sophie. John Pascoe Fawcner will greet him, as he did on a similar occasion last year. Please join the welcoming throng of the residents of Port Phillip for this festive event.

Mothers' Day

Visitors to the Cottage on Mothers' Day listened to Sophie La Trobe, seated in the drawing room, reading letters she wrote to Agnes, while Agnes's younger sister Nelly looked on. This provided a charming scene and our visitors were fascinated to have a glimpse into the past as they listened to the news from 'Jolimont', which often, also, imparted interesting tit-bits of life of early Melbourne. Sophie's affectionate letters were a poignant reminder of the long years they spent here.

Cottage Openings

Our enthusiastic Guide team asked that, rather than close down for the winter, the Cottage be open on the last Sunday of June, July, August and September; so, if you would like the opportunity to take another tour of the Cottage (La Trobe Society members free of charge), please call in between 2 & 4 p.m. on those days.

The Guides and Reception Volunteers are also busy with many other openings during the winter months – the National Trust's School Holiday program (Cottage open 1-4 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays in the school holidays), the Melbourne Open House program (24-25 July) and Melbourne Day (30 August).

These extra sessions at the Cottage, and the fact that we hope to increase visitor numbers, mean that we would welcome new volunteers – if any La Trobe Society member is interested in becoming a guide or a reception volunteer, either for the summer Sunday openings, or the other events on Mondays and Wednesdays, please contact Helen Botham.

La Trobe's Medicine Chest

Readers of the last issue of *La Trobeana* may be interested to call into the Cottage to get a close look at La Trobe's Medicine Chest. Described in fascinating detail by Dr John Dwyer (*La Trobeana*, 9 (1) 18-19, 22-31), the chest is now installed in a new display case, where visitors can scrutinise its wondrous potions at close quarters.

We look forward to seeing La Trobe Society members at the Cottage.

Helen Botham

Chair FOLTC

Telephone 03 9583 1114

foltc@latrobesociety.org.au

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The La Trobes, Church and Society: Religious belief and spirituality in Melbourne, 1839-1854.

Tuesday 5 October, 2010

7.30 – 9.30 p.m.

Seminar presented jointly by the La Trobe Society and the Institute for Spiritual Studies, St Peter's Church, Eastern Hill.

Historians Peter Sherlock and Colin Holden join forces to rediscover the spiritual world of early colonial Melbourne. Pivotal to an appreciation of this world is the figure of Charles Joseph La Trobe (1801-1875). Colin Holden will conduct a tour of St Peter's Church, Eastern Hill, introducing attendees to significant historic features of the site, including the memorials to the La Trobe Family. Peter Sherlock considers the wider context of religious belief and practice in the Melbourne of the 1840s and 50s, epitomised by La Trobe's links with the Moravians and early colonial church leaders. What was the shape of belief for the first generation of European settlers, and how did religion shape colonial Melbourne? This seminar helps demonstrate the surprising variety and strength of those early religious commitments.

Venue: St Peter's Church , 15 Gisborne Street, East Melbourne (Corner Albert and Gisborne Streets). Melways: Map 2F, K1

COST: \$15 per person; \$12 concession

Public transport: Trams: 11, 12, 42, 109

Please keep this date free in your diaries. A booking form will be sent to Members closer to the date.

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, 2010 The Alexandra Club

Friday 3 December, 2010

6.30 p.m.

La Trobe Society Committee member, Loreen Chambers will host this year's Christmas celebration at the Alexandra Club.

Dr Brenda Niall will speak at this function on the friendship between Georgiana McCrae and Charles and Sophie La Trobe.

Members and their friends are welcome.
Dress code for men is jacket and tie.

Venue: 81 Collins Street, Melbourne

Cost: \$60 per person

Please keep this date free in your diaries. A booking form will be sent to Members closer to the date.

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/LaTrobeanalIndex.html>. Enquiries should be directed to

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