

FRIENDS OF LA TROBE'S COTTAGE

Newsletter No. 13
November 2012

Candlelit Carols at the Cottage – Tuesday 18 December 2012, 7 – 9pm

Celebrate Melbourne's first Christmas tree with The Lyceum Singers. The La Trobe family introduced the European idea of the Christmas tree to the Port Phillip District in the early 1840s, and in letters home Swiss-born Sophie wrote of happy family Christmases at their cottage. On this special musical evening the Cottage will be illuminated and decorated in the traditional way. Refreshments with a festive flavour will be served. You are most welcome to bring a picnic to enjoy beforehand in the Cottage grounds. This event will raise funds to replace the existing roof of the servants' quarters, following the replacement of the Cottage roof shingles last year. Entry \$10 per person, \$25 family. No bookings necessary.

Image: The Moravian Star used in traditional decorations



Garden Update, by Sandi Pullman Volunteer Garden Co-ordinator

Over the last 12 months, lots of work has been happening in the garden. We have sourced most of the plants we identified as available to La Trobe up until 1854 and are now running out of room to plant anything new. With the help of the volunteers we planted our bare root roses and they are coming into flower. The Weeping Elm bed has filled out and looks gorgeous, full of foxgloves, sweet peas, valerian and geraniums. La Trobe would be proud of us! The two *Glycine latrobeana* are doing well and the *Correa lawrenceana* var. *latrobeana* Mountain correa donated by the Australian Plant Society, behind the Kitchen block has settled in. We have also researched several plants that La Trobe collected in the District of Port Phillip and you will be able to read about them on our garden page: www.foltc.latrobesociety.org.au/garden.html.



And finally the good news is the National Trust has agreed to our erecting trellis on the front steps, as depicted in the pastel drawing of George Alexander Gilbert *A view of Jolimont 1843-44*. This will make the front of the Cottage more authentic and provide the creeper *Maurandya barclayana* Angels trumpet with a structure to climb on.

Cottage Openings

Combined tours of La Trobe's Cottage and Government House have resumed and may be booked for Monday or Thursdays mornings through the National Trust Booking Office, telephone: 8663 7260, email: bookings@natrust.com.au (or online via: www.nationaltrust.org.au/vic/Events). The cost is Adult \$20, concession \$15 and there are discounts for groups and National Trust members.

Committee

Chairman	John Drury	9646 2112	Secretary	Dianne Reilly	9646 2112	Publicity	Helen Armstrong	9592 5616
Cottage	Lorraine Finlay	9563 6363	Treasurer	John Drury	9646 2112	<Webmaster	John Botham	9583 1114>
Garden	Sandi Pullman	9646 9776	Building	Max Joffe	9563 6363			
Guides	Lorraine Finlay	9563 6363	Education	Loreen Chambers	9830 0332			

Weekly Sunday afternoon openings, from 2pm to 4pm, are arranged by a small band of enthusiastic volunteers – the guides and receptionists responsible for the regular openings of the Cottage from October to April.

At one such Sunday opening last autumn we had an unusual visitor, all the way from the foothills of the Grampians that La Trobe enjoyed climbing on a number of occasions during his rides inspecting the Port Phillip District. Martin Godwin is a member of the Creswick RSL Light Horse Troop, who were commemorating the 110th anniversary of the ending of the Boer War when he called by on his 4 year old Waler called Leon.



La Trobe's Settee

A donation from the Friends group provided the funds to repair and re-upholster La Trobe's settee, which is located in the bedroom. The walnut settee circa 1850, reputed to have been given by La Trobe to his manservant Mr Sankey, was purchased by the National Trust some years ago. It had been on display in the Cottage since 1995 and was in a poor condition. The fabric on the seat and side rests was ripped, worn and stained; the webbing underneath frayed and sections of the underneath supports in a state of collapse.

The craftsman who undertook the work retained the steel springs, remarking that these would have replaced the original copper springs during an earlier re-upholstering. He strengthened the loose timber supports and was able to retain the stuffing comprising a mixture of horsehair and coconut fibre. A dark emerald green cotton velvet (colour Hunter, imported from America) was chosen to replace the old fabric. The colour is as close to a 'fashionable' green circa 1850 as possible. New green braid was stitched around the settee. New webbing made of jute was incorporated beneath and then calico tacked over the webbing to complete the process. The restored settee is now looking very handsome and appropriate in its setting of circa 1850.



Settee before work was undertaken

