



Newsletter No. 25

December 2019

Liaison Coordinator: Alison Pearson

Our three-monthly meetings with representatives of the National Trust continue. At our last meeting on 28 November, I voiced concern over the very low numbers of Sunday visitors so far this season. Booked tour groups still average three per month, but numbers are lower than in previous years. Sherredan Maher, National Trust Assets Manager, reported that many properties are experiencing a significant decrease in visitor numbers. We plan to investigate boosting publicity for both our Sunday openings and the booked tours.

Judy Rigg has decided to step down as Gardens Coordinator. Judy has made a significant contribution to the Cottage garden during her time as Coordinator, and we are delighted that she will continue to be involved as an active member of the garden working-bee team. We will advertise for a new Garden Coordinator shortly, and in the meantime, Helen Botham has agreed to act in the role.

Helen Armstrong's contribution to La Trobe's Cottage has been recognised recently with a STAR Award, presented to her by Sherredan Maher. Because Helen's work takes place mainly 'behind the scenes' I'm not sure everyone appreciates how much time she spends looking for ways to promote the Cottage, which she does by liaising with the marketing and publicity departments of the National Trust. Helen also goes 'above and beyond' when it comes to booked tours, Sunday openings and special events, and can be relied upon to put her hand up to help out if rostered volunteers are unable to fill their slot. Congratulations Helen on a well-deserved award!



Cottage receptionist, Bunty Evans, has decided it's time to retire from her Cottage duties. We are very sorry to see her go – she has been a dedicated and reliable receptionist, and also contributed to our Family Day on 26 January, demonstrating flower card making. Thank you Bunty and all the best for the future.

Cottage Management Team

Liaison	Alison Pearson	0400 543097	Maintenance	Colin Mickelburgh	0423 114619
Volunteers	Colin Mickleburgh	0447 018224	Funds/Statistics	Helen Botham	0407 814008
Housekeeping	Ellen Walters	0419 519763	Publicity	Helen Armstrong	9592 5616
Garden	Helen Botham	0447 01824	Curatorial	John Botham	0407 814008

Charlotte Pellet family visit

Retired cottage volunteer, Joy Harley, is a great grand-daughter of the La Trobe family's housekeeper, Charlotte Pellet. Charlotte's daughter, Rose, married Frederic Amiet in the days leading up to La Trobe's departure from Melbourne in 1854. Their descendants are now numerous, and many have a great interest and pride in their ancestor's early links with Victoria's first governor. Joy brought her three sons and their families to the Cottage for a tour and at the conclusion of the visit Joy presented the National Trust with a large silver spoon which was given to Charlotte Pellet by La Trobe when he left Melbourne in 1854. After accession protocols have been completed, it will be on display in the Cottage.



New Zealand La Trobe family member visit

In 1852 La Trobe's second cousin, eighteen-year old James La Trobe, arrived in Melbourne before going off to the Ballarat goldfields and then, in 1854, moving on to New Zealand where he settled in a pioneering district of the North Island and was engaged in a number of pursuits before becoming a respected head master for many years. He had a family of three sons and two daughters, all of whom have descendants in New Zealand. One of his great-great-grandsons, James Richard (Jim) La Trobe, visited the Cottage with his wife in early October and presented items of family memorabilia to the C J La Trobe Society.

Works have been taking place at the Cottage. The shutters which had been rotting have been repaired by the National Trust's handyman. Locks have been changed and plans for the new electrical wiring are to be submitted to Heritage Victoria.



A kitchen dresser is to be installed in Reception. This will enable books and other merchandise to be well-displayed, and stock and other materials to be stored in the cupboards underneath.

The large bellows have been removed from the Cottage kitchen. They were returned to Government House, their original location.

Cottage Events:

Spring Opening and Garden Day, Sunday 6 October

A celebration of La Trobe's garden brought a good number of visitors to the Cottage. Tours of the garden explained how La Trobe loved his garden and planned it carefully. Visitors were shown the 'latrobeii' species we have in the garden: *Grevillea latrobeii* syn *G. rosmarinifolia*, *Acacia latrobeii* syn *A. acinacea* and *Eremophila latrobeii*.



Eremophila latrobeii



Acacia latrobeii syn *A. acinacea*

Volunteers End-of-Year gathering, 28 November

Cottage volunteers were joined by Sherredan Maher and Alyce McCue from the National Trust for lunch on Thursday 28 November. Melbourne's weather has been somewhat fickle of late, but we were blessed with a fine day for our traditional Cottage garden picnic. Sherredan thanked the volunteers for their work during the year, saying the National Trust staff appreciated the efforts of the volunteers and the Management Team throughout the year.

The La Trobes' Music day, Sunday 1 December. Grey skies and constant rain didn't dampen the enjoyment we had from listening to music that would have echoed through the La Trobes' Cottage and its grounds. Bruce Macrae played the piano sonatas composed by Christian Ignatius La Trobe and dedicated to his friend Haydn. Bruce accompanied Mia Robinson, a student at the Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School, singing some beautiful songs likely to have been heard in the Jolimont drawing room. Bruce also played some organ preludes by Christian Ignatius La Trobe. Cottage guide David Woods and his family played folk songs of the era, initially outside the Cottage, welcoming the visitors, and then in the drawing room. Despite low numbers, those who had braved the cold and wet were delighted to be taken back to Jolimont in the 1840s. We volunteers were enthralled to hear the lovely music filling the Cottage. It really brought it to life and gave us a feel for musical evenings in Jolimont in the La Trobes' time.



Future Cottage Events:

26 January 2019, 1-4pm. Special Opening at La Trobe's Cottage

The Cottage will be open between 1pm and 4pm, coinciding with the opening of Government House on that day.

Sunday 1 March, 2-4pm. La Trobe's Art

For the last of our three 'Themed Sundays' this season, we will celebrate La Trobe's Art. Plans are still being made, but we hope to display copies of La Trobe's art as well as paintings/drawing of La Trobe's Cottage done by other artists. If anyone has a picture of the cottage they would be prepared to lend for the day, we would be pleased to hear from them. This event will be followed by

La Trobe's Birthday Celebration, Sunday 1 March, 4.30-6pm

Friends of La Trobe's Cottage Annual Lecture, May date tba, 6.30-8pm

Dr Eleanor Robin OAM will speak about 'Swanston: Merchant Statesman'

Thanks to all Cottage volunteers for your support during 2019 and best wishes for a peaceful festive season.

