



Newsletter No.35

24 March 2021

Dear Volunteers,

Now that other National Trust properties are opening up and running events for the public, we asked the National Trust if we could consider opening just for two Sundays in April – 4<sup>th</sup> (Easter Sunday) and 18<sup>th</sup> (Heritage Festival). The National Trust agreed, but we were unable to fill the roster for 4 April (Easter Sunday) as so many of you, not surprisingly, have family commitments. We've therefore had to cancel that opening, and we will focus all our efforts on 18 April. This is the first day of the National Trust's Heritage Festival, and the opening will be publicised on National Trust publicity platforms, so we can expect a good number of visitors. Many thanks to those who have volunteered to man the Cottage that day – we'll be in touch with you closer to the time.

We're also working with the National Trust with an aim to re-start booked group tours of Government House, with an option for those tours to walk over to the Cottage, but offering no internal entry – we cannot, at this time, allow large groups into the interior of the buildings. But our ability to offer individuals and small groups the opportunity to tour Government House through Eventbrite bookings, is something that has proved popular in the past, and we can realistically hope to resume these before long.

Sheetal has carried out research about how two donated dining chairs should be re-upholstered and her recommendation (after chatting with the Team and others) has been approved by the National Trust. The chairs will therefore soon be re-upholstered, funded by the Friends of La Trobe's Cottage, and will appear in the Cottage before too long. The chairs were donated by a man whose family tradition states that they were originally sold as part of an auction of furniture of Governor La Trobe but this cannot be proved. They are pictured here before their re-upholstery. In order to make room for them in the dining room, the two Gothic carved chairs have been moved to the second closet, which provides more space for the carved chairs to be displayed to advantage.



Sheetal is also following up on a project begun two years ago to offer internships to university students completing heritage conservation/museum studies courses. Some small research projects into Cottage furniture and artefacts have been suggested which possibly may be followed up by these students.

Some delicate cleaning of the collection will be carried out by Sheetal and Ellen before our opening on 18 April. They'll be putting into practice the National Trust cleaning protocols.

There is concern about a rotting veranda post outside the dining room and some other rotting timbers on the servants' block. Colin is working with the National Trust over these matters.

**Cottage Management Team**

Liaison	Helen Botham	0447 018224	Maintenance	Colin Mickleburgh	0423 114619
Volunteers	Colin Mickleburgh	0423 114619	Funds/Statistics	Helen Botham	0447 018224
Housekeeping	Vacant		Publicity	Helen Armstrong	0427 925 616
Garden	Helen Botham	0447 018224	Curatorial	Sheetal Deshpande	0413 035501

The garden continues to look good. We held a working bee on 16 March. The picture here (right) shows the spireas with their graceful stems arching skyward with the pretty windflowers growing amongst them. Also the *Plectranthus ecklonii* outside the drawing room window is at its Autumn best. We hear from the National Trust that there have been some enquiries about weddings to be held in the garden, so we are enthusiastically following up on that.



Garden Working Bees will continue on the third Tuesday mornings. The next one will take place on Tuesday morning 20 April. We will be pleased to welcome our new garden volunteers, Rob and Shan Christie, on that day.

As we haven't been together for some time we are considering organising a tour for our volunteers of Bishops court, the home of the Anglican Archbishop in East Melbourne. This would take the place of an end-of-season meeting. For these tours, morning tea is served in the Drawing Room, then a tour of the house is given (with our volunteer Tim Gatehouse, who has researched the history of Bishops court and its residents) and then I would take you on a tour of the garden. There are many links between the Perrys (the first Bishops court residents) and La Trobe, and I know that Tim and I will very much enjoy the opportunity to talk about these to people who share our interest. The tours cost \$20 pp (which includes Morning Tea) and we need a minimum of 20 people, so we would need you to bring along your friends! It goes from 10am – 12 noon, and we hope to arrange a date in May. Can you please let me know if you'd be interested, and we'll put forward a suggested date.



I hope you'll all keep well and I will keep in touch.

On behalf of the Cottage Management Team,

Best wishes,

Helen

[Helen Botham](#),

[La Trobe's Cottage Management Team](#)