



Newsletter No.38

2 September 2021

Dear Volunteers,

The news yesterday was not good, but then I think we were all expecting that the originally scheduled end to lockdown was not likely to go ahead.

I spoke yesterday to Sherredan Maher, Executive Manager, Assets and Conservation, who, not surprisingly, was very concerned about the impact of this lengthened lockdown on all National Trust properties. Although the Premier announced that the restrictions are to be reviewed on 23 September, Sherredan believes that it will be some time after that before any opening of properties will be considered. She thinks our October 3 Opening very unlikely – she suggested that we may be able to go ahead with an 'Opening' in some form in November. And when we are eventually able to open, social distancing rules will be very much in place, which makes taking groups into the Cottage difficult. I raised the idea of giving the majority of our tour outside in the courtyard, and then taking individuals or couples quickly through the interior and she said this and other strategies, which might enable the property to open, will have to be considered.

But all of this will have to wait until the Covid situation is clearer in coming months.

There had been some talk of resuming, in a very small way, the Government House tours. However, this also has been put on hold.

I'm sorry to tell you that Sheetal Deshpande, who has had the role of Curatorial Coordinator, is to step down from our Cottage Management Team. Sheetal is undertaking a teacher certification course, leaving little time for her to devote to the Cottage. We thank Sheetal for all she has done: she has seen through the re-upholstering of our two new dining chairs and she managed the Tyvec-covering of all the furniture in response to the rodent attacks on it. It has been a great pleasure to work with her on our team; she has brought new ideas and energy to it. We wish her well for her course work and upcoming placement, and also her teaching career next year - we hope to see her still as a volunteer at the Cottage.

We have been very pleased to welcome Rob Christie to the Management Team. He has taken over the Statistics Coordinator role. Although it may seem there aren't many statistics to coordinate at the moment, we still need to submit a monthly report, which, although currently only includes the time we on the Management Team spend, it's still a job to be done and a role to fill, and we're very grateful to Rob for stepping up. The gardeners will know Rob and his wife Shan – they have been attending the Garden Working Bees this year.

Our workshop for all guides and receptionists can fortunately go ahead on Zoom – this will be, as scheduled, on Monday 20 September 10am – 12 noon. I'll be in touch about this closer to the time. Also the Friends of La Trobe's Cottage Annual Lecture, 'C J La Trobe: Jolimont plantsman', will be on Zoom on Wednesday 22nd September. It will probably be at 5pm, but the online format hasn't yet been finalised, so I'll get back to you about that too. Of course our Garden and Cottage Working Bees are postponed now until further notice.

On my daily walk, I sometimes go past the Cottage, and I was very sorry to see, the last few days, that our *Maurandya barclayana* or as we call it 'Mrs Perry's Creeper', which has been hanging gracefully over the lattice near the front entrance, is dead. It looks to me as though an animal has jumped onto the netting

Cottage Management Team

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Curatorial	Vacant		Housekeeping	Vacant	

supporting its stem, and caused it to break off. It seems only to have happened a few days ago as there were still a few wilting green leaves, and we know it was OK when Ellen took her lovely photos two weeks ago. I have collected some seed heads from it and I will put the seeds to germinate immediately in the hope that we may get a few small plants next spring. But I'm afraid we'll be without it for this coming summer. As Sandi Pullman had pointed out, Mrs. Perry - the wife of Melbourne's first Anglican Bishop who lived in La Trobe's Upper Cottage - mentioned seeing the creeper growing at Jolimont.



Maurandya barclayana November 2020



Maurandya barclayana September 2021

I hope you will all manage this extended lockdown – it will be very nice to see you on 20 September; although the workshop is designed to update guides and receptionists on tour content and National Trust procedures, gardeners will be very welcome to come along.

I'll be in touch about the workshop and the Plantsman talk soon.

With best wishes from the Management Team,

Helen

Helen Botham
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