



Newsletter No.42

12 May 2022

Many thanks to all the volunteers who have contributed to our most successful season of Sunday openings since the launch of the Friends of La Trobe's Cottage in 2009. Neville was able to report to our recent meeting that the average number of Sunday visitors this season was 12.7 compared with 7.7 our previous, pre-Covid, season (with 25 and 34 visitors on two Sundays in April). There seem to be a number of factors contributing to this – breaking out of Covid, the return of interstate and international visitors, publicity on social media provided by NTAV, and the availability of pre-booking. We are hoping this trend will continue next season. If so, we'll need a bigger volunteer team, so we're very pleased that our new volunteers, Catherine Gay and Thea Gardiner, have now joined the guide team.

One Sunday which provided no visitors was Grand Prix Sunday, 10 April. We had not previously opened on Grand Prix Sunday, but saw this as a trial. There were very few people about in the park, there was a lot of noise from helicopters buzzing continuously and the air display prevented any conversation. However, our new guides made good use of the time practising their tours for each other, and Thea provided a delicious lemon-ricotta cake for afternoon tea.



New guides Catherine and Thea with Colin and Graham on Grand Prix Sunday

Government House tours continue once a month with a maximum of 10 visitors. This requires only one guide per month, with a requirement for each guide of only one or two tours per year. This lack of continuity causes some difficulty for the guides. A meeting of Government House guides was held recently, with Joan Daw leading the discussion. Colin will continue to liaise with Government House and NTAV on these matters.

New guide Catherine has drawn our attention to the samplers in the second closet, and their significance with regard to the importance of embroidery in the education of young women such as the La Trobe daughters. This reminds us that the National Museum of Australia in Canberra holds Rose Pellet's sampler. This is a charming piece, beautifully worked by a child as young as nine years old. Do the cottages and potted plants and flowers represent what Rose saw around her at Jolimont? It is likely that Agnes, Cecile and Nellie produced similar pieces of work at that age.



Charlotte Pellet's sampler
National Museum of Australia

Cottage Management Team

Liaison	Helen Botham	0447 018224	Maintenance	Colin Mickleburgh	0423 114619
Volunteers	Colin Mickleburgh	0423 114619	Statistics	Neville Jarvis	85559116
Garden	Helen Botham	0447 018224	Publicity	Helen Armstrong	0427 925616
Curatorial	Neville Jarvis	85559116	Adjunct Coordinator:	Rob Christie	0488 759065

La Trobe's Birthday 20 March

La Trobe's 221st birthday was celebrated by the La Trobe Society on Sunday 20 March with the usual fare of sparkling wine and cake. It was good to see so many friends and supporters, many of whom noted the pretty garden – thanks to the gardeners for helping to get it ready for the event. My brief talk about La Trobe's deep interest in botany was followed by a tour of the garden focusing on the special plants we have. The plants representing those sent to La Trobe by Ronald Gunn in 1844, Sydney Botanic Garden in 1844 and Camden Nursery in 1851 have labels corresponding to their description in the garden guide.



La Trobe's 221st Birthday – 20 March 2022



Special plants labelled

We are planning to promote Garden Tours next Spring – Working Bees will continue over the winter to ensure the garden looks its best for our opening Garden Day on 2 October. We welcome our new garden volunteer, Pamela Jellie, who will provide invaluable advice and support.

Volunteers Meeting 29 April

Thanks to those who participated in our volunteers meeting on Zoom. Matters discussed have been noted in the Minutes of that meeting which have been circulated, but a few points to raise here:

We have asked the National Trust to apply for two new panels, one for each of the current series, to provide information to visitors about the Traditional Owners, before European settlement, of the land at Jolimont and at the Cottage's current site. We have also asked them to consider again the lack of facilities for visitors and volunteers – the need for a reception area and kitchen and toilet facilities. If a building was to be constructed the ideal position would be on the dining-room side of Cottage to be near the new path from Anzac Station to the Royal Botanic Gardens.

Future Events

Sunday 22 May 2022, 2.00pm – 3.30pm : Governor La Trobe and Early Fitzroy

A Fitzroy History Society event.

Speakers: Tim Gatehouse, Peter Yewers and Mike Moore will talk about La Trobe the person and his relations with the Melbourne City Council, of which Fitzroy became a ward in 1850 and grew into Melbourne's first suburb.

La Trobe laid the foundation stone for St Peter's Eastern Hill in 1846. He and his wife Sophie were regular worshippers at the Church and the present vicar, Bishop David Farrer, will offer a tour of the church focusing on the links with the couple.

Venue: St Peter's Eastern Hill Church, corner Gisborne and Albert Streets, East Melbourne (enter from Albert Street down driveway)

Admission: \$10. To register for the event, by 17 May, please click on the following link:

www.eventbrite.com.au/e/copy-of-charles-joseph-latrobe-and-early-fitzroy-tickets-313140530757

16-22 May 2022 : National Volunteer Week

The National Trust would like to take the opportunity during this week to celebrate their volunteers; they wish to recognize and acknowledge our hard work. Although there'll not be the usual the Volunteers morning tea this year, they're planning an event closer to International Volunteer Day (5 December) and I feel sure we'll be pleased to participate in that event. In the meantime, please be aware that the National Trust appreciates the work you do to support our property, as do we, the Volunteer Management Team.

Tuesday 12 July 2022, 5.30pm – 7.30 pm : Victoria's Earliest Potteries

A La Trobe Society/Friends of La Trobe's Cottage event.

Speaker: Historian Gregory Hill, recognised as the leading authority on Australian Colonial Pottery and Australian Art Pottery, will give a presentation on his book, *Victoria's Earliest Potteries*, featuring convict era potters and Victoria's earliest pottery which was close to La Trobe's *Jolimont* estate, and in operation during his period of office.

Venue: Royal Historical Society of Victoria, corner A'Beckett and William Streets, Melbourne.

Admission: \$25, includes refreshments.

Enquiries: secretary@latrobsociety.org.au, or contact Dianne Reilly on 0412 517 061.

One of the plants sent to La Trobe from the Botanic Garden in Sydney in 1844 was *Justicia alba*. I was pleased to see this plant for sale at the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens plant sale last December. We planted it outside the dining room and it settled in well immediately, flowering only two months later. A short time later, Judy Firkin attended a talk in which I included a photo of it, and she told me that she had propagated it! She subsequently wrote a piece for the FRBG Newsletter, see <https://www.rbgfriendsmelbourne.org/2022/05/09/justicia-carnea-alba/> Wonderful that Judy used our *Justicia alba* to give her the opportunity to inform the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens about our man La Trobe.

Justicia alba in the Cottage garden



A little while ago, I took some staff of the Herbarium at the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne on a tour of the Cottage garden, as a gesture of thanks for their help with my 'Plantsman' research. Pina Milne, who has recently retired from the Herbarium, told me she remembers seeing the Cottage being moved to its present site on 2 September 1998. She took some pictures which remind us what a huge job that was.



Moving day 1998, State Botanical Collection, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria. Photographer Pina Milne.

We'll keep in touch over the winter and will arrange our pre-season meeting in September, ready for our Garden Day Opening on 2 October.

On behalf of the Cottage Management Team,
Best wishes,
Helen Botham