



Newsletter No.43

9 August 2022

Things have been quiet at La Trobe's Cottage over these winter months, but the Management Team have been keeping in touch and have had a couple of meetings.

A positive activity was the review meeting arranged by Colin early in July between National Trust staff (Annette Shiell, Georgia Stannard), Government House volunteer guides (Colin, Charles, Joan Daw), and Government House staff (Patrick Rundle, Deborah Nicolson, Melanie Miller). Colin felt it appropriate to seek feedback on how we are conducting the tours post Covid, and provide an opportunity to ask about some details that have been identified following our tours. The meeting had a positive outcome, with GH staff noting that they are happy with the tours we are providing. They undertook to provide information about the collection and also to increase the number in the tours from 10 to 20, with still only one guide.

We were sorry to hear from longstanding Government House guide, Ann Baker, that she felt it was time to retire. Ann has been volunteering since 1995, and we have very much appreciated her professional approach to her guiding at both Government House and La Trobe's Cottage. We are hoping we'll have a chance to thank Ann in person at the end of the year.

There are various maintenance issues currently: The rat problem continues. Despite regular visits from Adams Pest Control, and blocking any obvious entry routes to the Cottage, we usually find a few rat droppings every time we enter the Cottage.

The timbers on the kitchen block are getting progressively more rotten. Alyce is aware of this, but there are no funds in the current budget for repairs to La Trobe's Cottage.

Alexis is arranging for the bedspread to be dry-cleaned; we'll have a Working Bee on 20 September to prepare the Cottage for our Spring opening on 2 October. The Friends of La Trobe's Cottage will fund the purchase of a new vacuum cleaner which Alexis feels will make more efficient cleaning of items in the Cottage.

There have been a couple of Garden Working Bees – thanks to the gardeners who have attended. Last time, Chris England from Merrywood Plants pruned the espaliered apple trees. He did an excellent job, and we can hope for a good crop next Autumn, if the possums don't beat us to them. Other jobs included pruning all the roses, planting out some winter annuals, raking up the last of the autumn leaves, and tidying and weeding. We'll have a big Working Bee on 20 September to prepare the garden for our Garden Day on Sunday 2 October.



Chris England at work, and his great results

Cottage Management Team

Liaison	Helen Botham	0447 018224
Volunteers	Colin Mickleburgh	0423 114619
Garden	Helen Botham	0447 018224
Curatorial	Neville Jarvis	85559116

Maintenance	Colin Mickleburgh	0423 114619
Statistics	Neville Jarvis	85559116
Publicity	Helen Armstrong	0427 925616
Adjunct Coordinator:	Rob Christie	0488 759065



Pamela and Rob discuss the finer points of rose pruning

Morning Tea



Neville making a difference



Looking ahead to October, we are just one or two volunteers short. We are not necessarily seeking new guides; we need someone who can manage the electronic payment system (only card payments are accepted now – no cash) and volunteers who can help with practical matters such as setting up the gazebo and dealing with issues that may arise during the afternoon - some energetic volunteers who would be happy to help run the Sunday openings; a deep knowledge of La Trobe or his Cottage is not required. If you know anyone who may be interested, I would be very pleased to hear from them.

We plan a Volunteers Meeting on Thursday 22 September, so could you please Save the Date. It is likely to be a Zoom meeting at 10am. This will be an opportunity to talk about new developments and to run through planned procedures for the coming season.

Future Events

Wednesday 14 September 2022, 5.30 – 7.30pm: Friends of La Trobe's Cottage Annual Lecture

The *Lady of St Kilda*: a link between the Outer Hebrides and the Antipodes.

Speaker: John Botham, Chair of Friends of La Trobe's Cottage.

This illustrated talk explains how the Schooner *Lady of St Kilda* connected La Trobe's naming of St Kilda with the remote Scottish island of St Kilda, which John visited recently.

Venue: Royal Historical Society of Victoria, Cnr William and A'Beckett, Streets, Melbourne. Admission \$25 per person (includes refreshments, 5.30pm).

Enquiries: email secretary@latrobesociety.org.au, or phone 0412 517 061.

Please note that bookings are required. Online bookings available via:

<https://www.latrobesociety.org.au/friends-of-la-trobes-cottage-annual-lecture-3>

I will be in touch closer to our meeting in September.

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