



## Newsletter No.46

2 March 2023

We have had some interesting visitors during the past month.

On 7 February we were honoured by an informal visit by representatives of the Swiss Delegation in Australia. They were the Deputy Head of Mission, Fabian Grass, the Science, Technology and Education Advisor, Sébastien Monnet, and the Honorary Consul in Melbourne, Manuela Erb. M. Grass had visited the Jolimont precinct and saw the plaque erected by Public Record Office Victoria at the original site of the Cottage. Being 'a big fan of Sophie La Trobe' he found our contact details on the FOLTC webpage and sent an email asking whether it might be possible, at very short notice, to visit. Helen Armstrong was able to respond to this request, providing an informative tour of the Cottage. The visitors were interested in Swiss-born Sophie La Trobe's life in early Melbourne, and they are keen to foster relations with the Cottage and build on the 'Sophie connection'. An Australian embassy has been recently re-established in Berne.



Manuela Erb, Hon. Swiss Consul Melbourne, Fabian Grass, Deputy Head of Mission, Swiss Embassy, Canberra; guide Helen Armstrong.

At a Sunday opening on 19 February Neville Jarvis had the pleasure of welcoming four descendants of an early house servant at *Jolimont*, Maria Watson, who emigrated from London and arrived with the La Trobes from Sydney in 1839. She and her sister Esther both worked at *Jolimont* for a year until they married, Maria moving to Geelong and Esther accompanying her husband back to Ireland. The visitors appreciated seeing the cottage and hearing about 1840s Melbourne. A conversation with Neville after this visit has prompted Helen Armstrong to compile a list of La Trobe's servants and this will be forwarded to our volunteers.



Shelley McGuinness, left, and three of her relatives

Following the Cottage Management Team's concern about low Sunday visitor numbers during November and December, we discussed some initiatives to promote the Cottage, one of which to make contact with the City of Melbourne Tourism volunteers – the 'red coats' who are available in the CBD to answer questions and advise visitors to Melbourne. Following this, a group of seventeen City of Melbourne volunteers undertook a 'Familiarisation Tour' of the Cottage on Tuesday 28 February. They reported that they enjoyed the tour and the information provided. Several didn't know the Cottage was there, and most were surprised at the genuine artefacts and furniture held there. We hope their visit may cause them to consider suggesting that tourists visit La Trobe's Cottage.

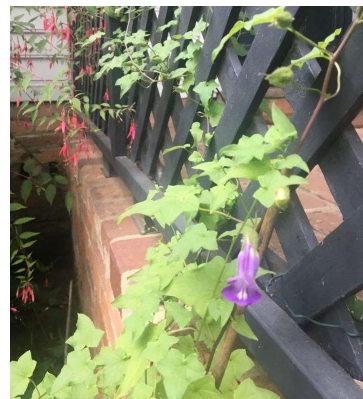
### Cottage Management Team

Liaison	Helen Botham	0447 018224	Maintenance	Colin Mickleburgh	0423 114619
Curatorial	Neville Jarvis	0490 494009	Volunteers	Helen Botham	0447 018224
Garden	Helen Botham	0447 018224	Publicity	Helen Armstrong	0427 925616
Statistics	Neville Jarvis	0490 494009	Gov't House Liaison:	Colin Mickleburgh	0423 114619

Another initiative was to send information to Garden Clubs about the garden tours we offer. Twenty members of the Frankston Garden Club visited on Saturday 21 January, and were given handouts about the history of La Trobe's garden and the plants we have now. As they left, they said they found the tour of great interest and had thoroughly enjoyed the visit.

The Cottage garden is starting to look autumnal now, and a busy Working Bee with eleven participants took place on Tuesday 21 February. Some bigger shrubs were pruned hard back, and the beds around the Cottage were weeded and tidied. We thank all those that took part.

We are very pleased to note that the *Maurandya barclayana* (Mrs Perry's creeper) grown from the seed taken from the specimen on the front porch lattice that mysteriously died in September 2021 (see FOLTC Newsletter 38 <https://www.foltc.latrobesociety.org.au/documents/FOLTCNewsletter38.pdf>) is doing well, and even has a few flowers. Mrs Perry would be pleased!



The new *Maurandya barclayana*

Work to replace rotting timbers on the Servants' Block, to be funded by the Friends of La Trobe's Cottage, has been carried out. There is still more work to be done on some rotting window frames and Alyce, National Trust Project Manager, has placed this on the maintenance list.

The National Trust Appeal for funds for the restoration of the La Trobe family portraits has been launched. The information about this appeal has been sent in a separate email, see <https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/la-trobe-portraits>

#### **Future events:**

**La Trobe's Birthday** will be celebrated at La Trobe's Cottage on Sunday 19 March after our Sunday opening, 4.30 – 6.30pm.

Cottage volunteer, Catherine Gay, will present a talk titled The Cottage Samplers. She will tell us how the samplers we have on display in La Trobe's Cottage, and the reproduction of Rose Pellet's beautiful sampler, reflect the importance placed on developing home-making skills in the education of young ladies during La Trobe's time. This will be of particular interest to our guides, as Catherine's talk will provide fascinating background for our tours. Sparkling wine and birthday cake will be served. Admission: \$15. Bookings essential, at <https://www.latrobesociety.org.au/la-trobes-birthday-celebration-3>

**Volunteers End-of-Season meeting:** Tuesday 2 May, 10.00 – 11.15am, coffee from 9.45am.

Please put this date in your diary as we would be very pleased to see you. We'll bring you up-to-date on matters to do with the Cottage and it will provide an opportunity for us all to catch up and have a chat.

**Friends of La Trobe's Cottage Annual Lecture:** Tuesday 2 May, 5.30-7.00pm.

'The *Golden Age*: La Trobe's journey home'. Speaker John Botham, Chair, Friends of La Trobe's Cottage. The illustrated talk describes La Trobe's journey home on the Paddle Steamer *Golden Age* on the first commercial passage across the Pacific. He made 58 sketches on the journey including 37 during a six-day stopover in Tahiti. In Panama, the passengers had to travel across the isthmus by mule and train to join the Royal Mail Steamers for the Atlantic crossing. Venue: Royal Historical Society of Victoria, Cnr A'Beckett and William Streets, Melbourne. Refreshments. Admission: \$25 per person. Booking details later.



With thanks for your continued support, and we look forward to seeing you soon.

With best wishes from the Cottage Management Team.