



Newsletter No. 27

28 April 2020

Dear Volunteers,

We hope you are all managing well and keeping healthy. We see from the attached photo, forwarded to us by John Drury of the La Trobe Society, that La Trobe is following our government's advice and taking precautions! The bronze bust by Peter Corlett stands outside the Queenscliff Historical Society and was unveiled by the Governor in March 2016, see *La Trobeana*, July 2016, pp.6-7.

The Cottage Management Team are keeping in touch, with Alison passing on queries and information from the National Trust. We held a meeting on Zoom last week to discuss a few issues which have arisen.

We are pleased to tell you that Sheetal Deshpande has agreed to join our Team as the Curatorial Coordinator. Sheetal qualified as an Architect in India and has a Masters Degree in Architectural Conservation. She has a great interest in Heritage Architecture, and she has applied her interest and knowledge to her Cottage tours, having qualified as a guide earlier this year. Before the current pandemic, she was volunteering two days a week with the National Trust Collections team at Tasma Terrace. We welcome Sheetal to our team, and look forward to our first meeting with her when things return to normal.

Many thanks to those who responded to our request for your thoughts about a change in our Sunday opening times. Following your mainly positive responses, and approval from NTAV, we will go ahead with a change of hours next season. The Cottage will be open on the first and third Sundays of the month, 11am-4pm, from October (if COVID-19 allows) to May. The notice by the front door of the Cottage will be changed, as will the brochures that have been printed giving last season's hours. The National Trust and the FOLTC web sites will show the changed hours. We see this as a trial and will be interested to see if the outcomes justify making this arrangement permanent. We'll be interested, not only in the visitor statistics that ensue, but also your views.

The electrical works were completed under Alyce's supervision on 24 April. They included the removal of the small amount of asbestos lining from the electrical cupboard in the servants' block. This brings an end to the works to be carried out under the Cottage Improvement Project, as the Trust are not willing to proceed with the move of the alarm system. John Botham, Chair of FOLTC, will be writing to those who funded the works to thank them for their donations.

If you have any time for reading you may be interested to read Max Waugh's article about Governor Bourke, see *La Trobeana*, July 2018, pp.33-41. It's a good refresher on the events leading up to La Trobe's appointment.

A very sweet, and rather poignant, picture of the Cottage headed the last e-mail-out from the National Trust.

Please get in touch if you hear of anything that may be of interest to Cottage volunteers during this time – we're always pleased to have snippets of interest or good news to pass on to everyone.

With best wishes

Helen,
La Trobe's Cottage Volunteer Training and Welfare



Cottage Management Team

Liaison	Alison Pearson	0400 543097	Maintenance	Colin Mickleburgh	0423 114619
Volunteers	Colin Mickleburgh	0447 018224	Funds/Statistics	Helen Botham	0407 814008
Housekeeping	Vacant	0419 519763	Publicity	Helen Armstrong	9592 5616
Garden	Helen Botham	0447 01824	Curatorial	Sheetal Deshpande	0413 035501



Newsletter No. 28

12 June 2020

I hope you are all keeping well and enjoying now being able to get out and about a little more than before. This email is to let you know we're keeping in touch with the National Trust about issues as they affect the Cottage.

Of course we weren't due to open on Sundays till October, so that's a way off yet, and a decision about that may be some time in coming. There's no likelihood of booked tours yet either.

Our Cottage Management Team had another Zoom meeting recently – partly to say 'good-bye' and thank you to Ellen who's decided to step down from the Team Committee. She is going to be busy with renovating for the next year or two (both in Melbourne and the country), and felt she needed to remove the commitment of being on the team, but she has kindly offered to lead working bees to clean the Cottage collection once or twice a year, and she will also continue as part of our garden working-bee group. We have all seen the results of Ellen's great work in the Cottage, which have made us so proud to show visitors through the gleaming Cottage. She also donated the chairs and dresser in reception which led to a re-arrangement which transformed that area.

We had been concerned about the garden, as there had been no work done there for nearly three months, and volunteers are not yet permitted to enter their sites. So I asked Eliasha Muldowney of the NT Horticulture team, who oversees our work, if she could visit to carry out some pest and disease treatment, and some of the more urgent pruning which is required. She visited this week and did a wonderful job. As Serco also visited and mowed the grass and trimmed the edges, the garden now looks very well cared-for. There are a few pretty flowers. including, outside the fence, the *Iris unguicularis*, which are blooming happily away. I'm sure all the walkers who go past the Cottage will have been admiring them. You can get an idea of how nice it looks in the pictures I took yesterday, below. I will organise a Garden Working Bee as soon as I get the go-ahead from the National Trust.

We're pleased to see that the gardens at Rippon Lea and Como are now open to the public, and the Old Melbourne Gaol will be opening on 27 June; the Trust will be seeking to open up all their properties to visitors as soon as possible. We'll keep you informed of any issues which impact on the Cottage - Sherredan Maher, Assets Coordinator, is now on maternity leave and her role is being filled by Alyce McCue.

In the meantime I hope you are all keeping well – get in touch if you'd like to.

Best wishes

Helen

Helen Botham

La Trobe's Cottage Volunteer Training and Welfare
0447 018224



Iris unguicularis



Winter garden

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Newsletter No. 29

18 August 2020

Hello Volunteers,

I thought it was time to get in touch again to check in with you and say hello. We on the Team hope that you and your family are getting through this lockdown, although there's no doubt many are finding it very hard.

It seems we are a long way off even thinking about resuming normal operations at the Cottage, although we were very pleased to hear that a booking has been made for a Combined Tour for September 2021!

I am sorry to have to tell you that our dear Cottage cat, Minnie, was found deceased just by the garden box where she used to keep watch. It appeared she had been attacked by a fox. She was always standing by, either on her box or on the dining room veranda, keeping watch for us. We're not sure how she survived there, but we wondered if she kept the rat population down. However, we are assured by Colin and Alyce that the pest control measures now in place should ensure the Cottage's protection, even without Minnie. Kathleen from NTAV visits the Cottage to provide access for the pest control, fire and security services' regular inspections and she is taking extra care to check on the interior of the cottage for any rodent or other damage. We will plant a suitable plant in memory of Minnie, near where Sam from Serco buried her, when we get back to gardening.

If you are looking for some reading, a couple of articles from past issues of *La Trobeana* may be of interest: Susan Priestley's 2019 article about the La Trobe Testimonial Candelabrum Centrepiece, now held at the National Gallery of Victoria, www.latrobesociety.org.au/LaTrobeana/LaTrobeanaV18n3.pdf#Page=36 describes events surrounding La Trobe's departure from Melbourne in 1854. It also makes mention of the locally-made Testimonial Gold Vase, presented to La Trobe at the valedictory ball held in December 1853 prior to his departure from the colony the following May, described in more detail at <http://www.latrobesociety.org.au/LaTrobeana/LaTrobeanaV17n2.pdf#page=42>. All *La Trobeana* issues except for the latest issue have been posted on the web, <http://www.latrobesociety.org.au/LaTrobeana.html> - now might be a good time to re-read articles from the last 18 volumes!

There are many other online activities available just now - I've 'attended' some of Kenneth Park's beautifully illustrated talks about Marvellous Melbourne – he has an ongoing program of online talks, <https://mailchi.mp/d5d3535173ea/december-otb-gazette-2496390?e=00e61d8130>. I've attended some free concerts from the Recital Centre, and also paid for some on Melbourne Digital Concert Hall. I've included everyone's email address here today, so that if you have any suggestions which our volunteers would be interested in, can you let us all know? (Please do not press Reply All if you wish to reply just to me on other matters, however.)

The second wave of the virus has certainly put back any plans to re-open National Trust properties, and will definitely impact our summer Sunday season. We'll let you know of any developments with regard to this – Alyce, who continues to stand in for Sherredan while she's on maternity leave, keeps in touch with Alison about developments at National Trust headquarters. Sherredan, by the way, gave birth to Albert in early July – we hear they are both well.

In the meantime, we hope you are all managing and keeping well.

On behalf of the Management Team,

With best wishes,

Helen

Helen Botham

La Trobe's Cottage Volunteer Training and Welfare

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