



Newsletter No.30

15 September 2020

Hello Volunteers,

We hope you are seeing through this difficult time, and that you and your family have kept well throughout. It is good to see that numbers are decreasing, but I fear re-opening of the Cottage is still well into the future.

During the Covid-19 shutdown, the National Trust is endeavouring to keep up a presence through social media, and last week it was the turn of the Cottage. Their Instagram post can be viewed via this link

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CE3Jew3jz6S/?igshid=1xr6777lpoovv>

You should have all received an email last week from Emily Howells, National Trust People and Culture Manager, saying it is anticipated that National Trust gardens may re-open in late October, with programs inside buildings opening from late November. However, any decision about the re-opening of the Cottage may still be some way off.

I'm glad to tell you that the garden is being looked after. The gardens team from Serco have been working – they have completed weeding, edging and final mulching using what Sam from Serco tells me is 'a fine grade product from Bark King called 'Feeder' mulch'. And the garden really is looking very nice – the 'Elm Bed' is full of pretty flowers, and the cliveas and echium are at their best.



Our thoughts have turned, like many other institutions, to a virtual tour of the Cottage which could be offered. We have had, since 2015, a modest virtual tour: click on <https://barneymeyer.com/LaTrobeCottage>. This was produced by the National Trust in association Dr Jo Clyne of Education & Consultancy Services, History Teachers' Association of Victoria. If you click on the rooms on the menu on the left, and mouse over and click on items of furniture, or different areas in a room during this video, an information window pops up about, e.g. at the front door, 'Lonsdale' and 'portable cottage'; in the bedroom, 'Sophie La Trobe' and 'La Trobe Medicine Chest'; in the dining room, 'La Trobe's father', and 'La Trobe's grandfather', etc. You need to 'move' around the room, as on Streetview, to get to all the links. These links don't always work, and we are investigating now to see if anything can be done to update this, and perhaps increase the number of items with a link. We'll also need to make a few corrections, and we wondered if you'd like to help us 'Spot the Mistakes'. I have found quite a few, including items and typos in the pop-ups, and in the audio. Can you find more? And would you like to suggest any new links, and any other improvements?

The number of societies offering online talks seems to keep increasing. The Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens have been offering interesting talks for some time, and you may like to register for one or two, <https://www.rbgfriendsmelbourne.org/whats-on/> For FRBG and Garden History Society members the fee is \$5,

Cottage Management Team

Liaison	Alison Pearson	0400 543097	Maintenance	Colin Mickelburgh	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

for others it's \$10. The talks on the Lakes and Islands of the Botanic Gardens (22 October) and the Shrine Gardens (14 November) may give us a better understanding of areas near the Cottage.

We hope you all keep well, and that we are soon able to enjoy some greater freedoms.

On behalf of the Cottage Management Team,

Best wishes from

Helen,

[Helen Botham](#),
0447 018224



Newsletter No.31

15 October 2020

Hello Volunteers,

We hope you are all keeping well, if perhaps suffering from 'COVID-Fatigue'!

I wanted to let you know that the Australian Garden History Society have asked me to give a presentation about La Trobe and his garden at Jolimont. This will take place on Zoom on 29 October at 6pm. It will be based around the material I have presented before, using the drawings of Edward La Trobe Bateman but in this presentation I will be giving more details about how the plants in today's Cottage Garden represent the plants that La Trobe himself collected or were named after him. We'll look at plants on the lists sent to La Trobe in 1844 by Ronald Gunn in Van Diemen's Land and by the Sydney Botanic Garden and compare the old varieties with those available today. I'm providing lots of pictures of the plants in today's garden and talking about why they are there! Non-members of the AGHS are welcome to register, but I'm afraid it will cost \$10, see <https://www.trybooking.com/BLYZI>

Talking about the garden, Eliasha made another visit there earlier this week, to prune back the wattles after their splendid flowering in early spring. She and her colleague did a few other jobs, and the garden really looks good. The apples are in blossom, and the roses are all budding up well. Serco are keeping the lawn mowed and the edges trimmed.



Genista



Apple blossom

La Trobe Society members were sent a link to some new pages on the web site, showing 'La Trobe sites' – these are sites in England and Switzerland that have links with La Trobe – see them here <https://www.latrobesociety.org.au/LaTrobe-places-postcript.html>

I'm afraid you'll need to see them through this link as they're not visible if you just visit the web site. The Society's website has experienced some major problems due to advancing technology. Although most of the original site is still online, the menu system has failed and the site cannot be updated at the moment. John Botham is in the process of moving the material onto WordPress and if you go to the site's homepage you will see the work in progress.

The National Trust are no doubt hoping that there may be some easing of restrictions soon, which will allow re-opening of some properties, but I'm afraid La Trobe's Cottage is not likely to be among those opening early. As always, we will make sure you are informed about any likely changes there.

With best wishes to you all, and we look forward to the time we can get together again,

On behalf of the Management Team,

Best wishes

Helen Botham

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Newsletter No.32

9 November 2020

Dear Volunteers,

Things definitely seem to be looking up, and it's good to see Rippon Lea and Como Gardens open again. We'll be interested in any changes that may result from yesterday's announcement, but there's no news for us yet.

I mentioned in my last update that I was giving a talk for the Australian Garden History Society about how La Trobe developed his garden. As well as a discussion of how his estate developed over the time he lived at Jolimont, I gave some new information about the plants he had, and how he sourced them. I know that some of you 'attended' but I also know that the time didn't suit everyone. I think it provides some useful new information and also a reminder about things we've all known before about the Cottage and its development, so I've decided to present it again, just for all Cottage volunteers, free, on Monday 16 November at 4.45pm. The talk will take about 45 minutes, and if there are any questions or chat, that will take us up to around 5.45. I hope that might be a more convenient time. I'm sorry for those who attended the first time around and paid – I hadn't thought about this until after the event. I'll send a Zoom link to everyone soon.



As we're unable to get together for our usual end-of-year lunch in the Cottage garden, we've decided to ask you if you'd like us to arrange lunch in The Terrace café in the Botanic Gardens on Friday 4 December (if this isn't convenient for you, let me know, and we'll aim to make another date convenient for more people). This will provide an opportunity for us all to catch up on how our Covid year has been, and we hope will herald much more contact in 2021. When I enquired just recently, The Terrace wasn't taking bookings but maybe after yesterday's announcement they will. At least do Save the Date, and if you can let me know if you'd like to come along, I'll be in a position to make a booking as soon as that's possible.



The annual church service to celebrate La Trobe's life will now take place Virtually at St Peter's Eastern Hill on Sunday 6, December at 11am, <https://www.latrobesociety.org.au/category/events> (make sure you click on the event heading or picture for full information). This might be a chance for those who have not been able to attend the service in the past to join in, at 11am or subsequently.

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I'll attach some recent photos of the garden – the roses and spring flowers are blooming very prettily.

We will keep you informed of any developments. In the meantime it would be very nice to see you on 4 December (and 'virtually' on 16 November). Please let me know if you'd like to attend the lunch on 4 December.

With best wishes from the Cottage Management Team,

Helen
Helen Botham
0447 018224

