

Newsletter No.40

16 January 2022

Dear Volunteers,

We enjoyed seeing so many of you at our end-of-year get-together at KereKere café in the Fitzroy Gardens. It was good to have a chance to see each other and chat, after a year where there hasn't been too many opportunities for that. And we hope you all had a pleasant Christmas break, and a Happy New Year.

The Cottage has been open every Sunday during this time, thanks to the volunteers who have been manning these openings. We've had some very busy afternoons, with an average twelve visitors over the ten Sundays we've been open this season. It seems the fact that NTAV Bookings has put our Sunday Openings on Eventbrite seems to bring the visitors in – we have advanced bookings every week.



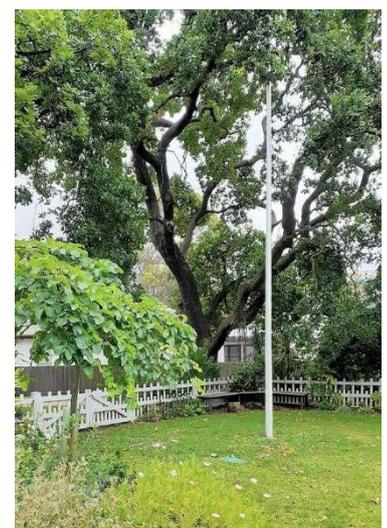
Lunch at KereKere

Reception is now routinely outside, just inside the double gates, under the gazebo. This provides a Covid-safe option and a pleasant spot for volunteers to rest between tours outside. It also makes more of a feature of the site and a welcoming entrance for visitors.

We decided to have a theme for each month of the season – December was 'Sophie's Christmas' and in January we are focusing on Family Life at Jolimont. February will be 'prefabricated house month', when we'll provide extra details about how factories in London were supplying cottages, such as La Trobe's, for British settlements around the world. During March we will focus on La Trobe's art, and in April will encourage visitors to enjoy Autumn in the Garden. NTAV always have an e-mailout at the end of each month, promoting the next month's activities, and our events are always included in this, and we're sure this brings a few more people in.

Sherredan Maher has provided us with a tablet for logging visitors, taking card payments and registering visitors who have no smart phone for the QR code. Although it simplifies keeping statistics for the National Trust (the login details go straight to their records) and for our Statistics coordinator, it is taking us all a while to get used to the new system. But we are grateful to Sherredan for supplying us with this, and it's a procedure that we must get used to.

Our garden contractor has arranged for Citywide Trees to cut back some branches on the large oak tree. The branches now cover the top of the flagpole so we can't raise the flag, and some other branches have been interfering with our gazebo at the entrance. There are also issues with the irrigation sprinklers, one of which Colin found was shooting water under Cottage floorboards. He has temporarily fixed this, and we hope to meet with the contractor's Irrigation Team soon to discuss the whole system.



Flagpole in the trees

Cottage Management Team

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

I'm afraid the possums have found the apples. Our crop is going to be seriously reduced thanks to their new-found skill in climbing on the apple branches, thus knocking the apples off, and also then eating them. We've never had this problem before but we've often wondered why not! We may decide, at our Working Bee this week, to net the trees. Otherwise the garden is standing up well to the summer heat. The roses have been repeat-blooming, providing a pretty show for most of the season so far.



An exciting opportunity for La Trobe's Cottage has arisen – the Cottage is to be used for a Fashion Shoot on Friday 21 January. It's good that our charming Cottage is being utilised and bringing much-needed income to the National Trust. We hope this may bring more of these types of activities to the Cottage.

Government House has agreed to the National Trust continuing to take a small group for tours on the first Monday morning of each month, starting February. A maximum of ten people has been set, thus requiring only one guide. So it seems there won't be many opportunities for the Government House guides, but let's hope that we may not only increase the size of the groups on these tours, but also their frequency in due course.

Future event

The La Trobe Society and the Friends of La Trobe's Cottage will celebrate La Trobe's Birthday at the Cottage on Sunday 20 March, after our regular Sunday opening. Following my Plantsman talk last year, I'll talk a little more about La Trobe's plant collecting, and then lead a tour of the garden focusing on recent interesting additions to the garden. Sparkling wine and birthday cake will be provided. More details later, but please save the date.

With thanks to you all for your support, and best wishes from the Cottage Management Team,
Helen



Justicia carnea and *Melianthus major*

Justicia carnea was included in the list of plants sent to La Trobe by Macarthur's Camden Nursery near Sydney in 1851 and *Melianthus major* is seen in some of Edward La Trobe Bateman's drawings of La Trobe's Jolimont garden.