



Our postponed End-of-Year lunch proved to be a very pleasant event, on a warm, humid afternoon. We enjoyed the opportunity to get together and chat, and to meet the National Trust staff who attended: Sherredan Maher (Assets Manager), Brook Powell, (Marketing Manager), Andrew Victorsen and Madi Ali (Brand & Marketing) and Amy Geddes (Graphic Design). We welcomed our new volunteers, D S Magid, Lindy Golding and Liv Strickland. Magid and Lindy are already established on the Sunday Guide roster and are providing excellent tours for our visitors. Liv will be taking her place on the reception table in the next month or two. Thanks to all who came and for the delicious food you brought. Madi was busy taking photos and she was keen to take a 'posed' one of the volunteers.



Volunteers End-of-Year lunch, 8 December



We are pleased to see the return of one of the La Trobe family portraits, Benjamin La Trobe, after its restoration. We had hoped to see the portrait of Christian Ignatius before the end of the year, but the conservator discovered more damage to the gilt surface of the frame than expected and an additional \$1,000 was needed to complete the re-gilding. So the National Trust re-visited the appeal, and the funds have now been raised. It will be back in the Cottage in good time for the Special Viewing at the La Trobe Birthday Celebration on 17 March.



Tim and Graham help John re-hang the Benjamin La Trobe portrait.

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	Adjunct Coordinator	Rob Christie	0488 759065

There is continued concern about water under the Cottage. The Council water team visited last month and on trialling the irrigation system it was found that a huge amount of water has been sprayed too often and for too long. This water has been pooling under the Cottage. Following consultation with National Trust Maintenance Coordinator, Myron, the sprinklers will now be reduced to once every four days, but this will be carefully monitored, with Myron liaising with the contractor to ensure the best outcome.

Following the replacement of some rotten timbers earlier in the year, which was funded by FOLTC, Myron repaired the rotting frame in the window above the staff kitchen entrance, and the National Trust Maintenance Officers, Craig and Tim, are now undertaking a large program of restoration, repair and painting of the timbers on the servants block. On completion of this work consideration will be given to repairing and repainting shutters that need this work.



Craig and Tim at work



Visit to Pentridge

Since our last Newsletter the volunteers have had three special visits organized for us by the National Trust. On 10 October, we were joined by Gulf Station volunteers on a tour of Pentridge Prison, arranged by Rob Kercher, Chris Hasdo and Kathleen Toohey. We found the tour, led by our guide Sandra, interesting and indeed very worthwhile, yet it was disturbing to hear of the brutality meted out to our prisoners in relatively recent decades. It was good to have an opportunity to get together with other volunteers, away from our beloved 'home property'.

On 5 December some of our volunteers attended Parliament House for a very informative tour organised for International Volunteer Day by Kate Drummond, the new NTV Volunteer Manager. They commenced with the impressive Legislative Assembly and passed by the Members' Dining Room on the way to the rooftop terrace erected above 102 new offices in 2017 and planted with hardy natives largely from Western Australia and Queensland to cope with high temperatures. The afternoon finished in the historic Library, rounding off a visit to a building beautifully built and maintained, of which we can all be proud.

And on 12 December, Kate invited the La Trobe's Cottage volunteers to join with the Como, Labassa and Rippon Lea volunteers for an End-of-Year gathering at Villa Alba in Kew, which took the form of an 'open house' and lunch in the garden with an outlook over the adjoining Studley Park. The mansion has morphed from being a nurses' home in the 1980s for Mt Royal Hospital to a museum and resource centre of 19th century interior decoration. The highlight is the Vestibule, doubling as Ballroom, with its restored marine scenes: one of Edinburgh and the other the North Shore of Sydney Harbour. The dining and drawing rooms feature very fine stencilling in the ceilings and friezes. The property is open on the first Sunday of the month.

We thank the National Trust for organizing these visits for the volunteers.

During a visit to Melbourne from Canberra the Swiss Ambassador, Caroline Bichet-Anthamatten, visited La Trobe's Cottage on 22 November with the Swiss Consul, Manuela Erb. The Ambassador was very pleased to gain an understanding of what family life for Swiss-born Sophie La Trobe must have been like in early Melbourne.

Recording for our podcast series is progressing. Peter Jewell has now recorded interviews with Dianne Reilly (La Trobe), John Botham (the Building), Neville Jarvis (Volunteering at La Trobe's Cottage) and Helen Botham (Garden). The last interview in the series, on the Collection, will be recorded early next year with a member of the National Trust Curatorial staff.

Swiss Ambassador's visit



Garden Working Bees continue – here is a photo we took of the group with items donated by Bunnings. We are sad to report that one of our much-loved *Acacia latrobei* (gold dust wattle) trees had to be removed. It was planted by Sandi Pullman in 2011, having been propagated by Royal Botanic Gardens (and previous La Trobe's Cottage) volunteer, Jenny Happell. All acacias have a life: it had collapsed from the base of the plant, and there was no alternative but to remove it. There are three other *Acacia latrobeis* still in the garden.

Following difficulties with establishing the connection between the phone, tablet and card reader on Sundays, we are grateful that Sherredan has provided us with a dongle which will provide a better Wifi/Internet connection at the Cottage to make reception duties on Sundays a bit smoother. Receptionists and Key Holders will be provided with instructions for its use.

Davydd Shaw has told us about the Botanica exhibition at the Inveresk campus of the University of Tasmania at Launceston, which has on display all twenty-six of Edward La Trobe Batemans's decorative initials. These were engraved on wood for several catalogues issued by the Melbourne Public Library from 1861 and were the first instances of Australian flora being used for decorative motifs. There are also botanical specimens collected by La Trobe's friend Ronald Gunn. The exhibition is open until 3 March. <https://www.qvmag.tas.gov.au/Whats-on/Museum-at-Inveresk/Botanica>

With many thanks for all your support and best wishes for the summer holiday season, from the Cottage Management Team.

