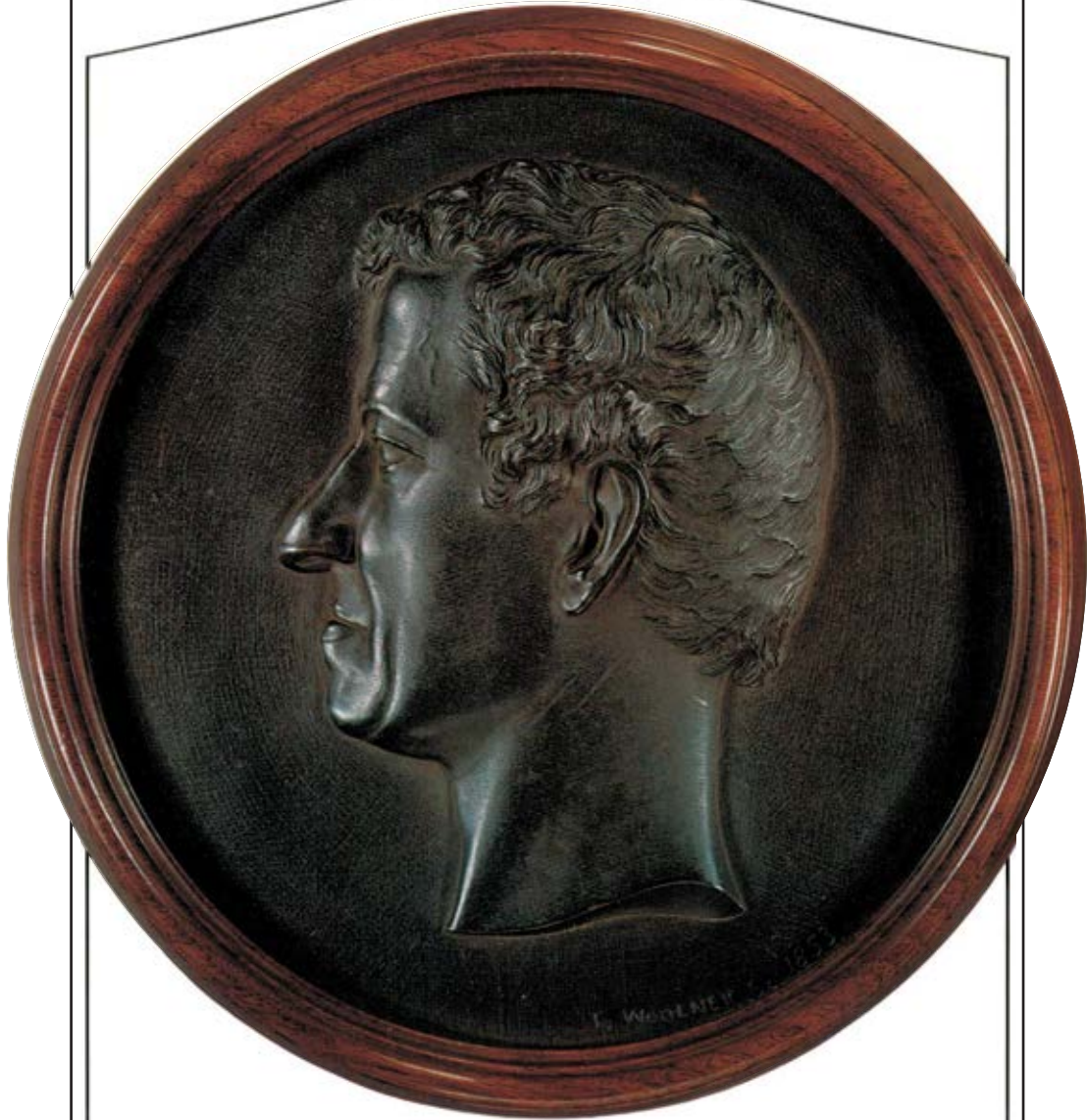


LA TROBEANA



Journal of the C. J. La Trobe Society Inc.

Vol 21, No 1, March 2022

ISSN 1447-4026

La Trobeana

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The C J La Trobe Society Inc was formed in 2001 to promote understanding and appreciation of the life, work and times of Charles Joseph La Trobe, Victoria's first Lieutenant-Governor.
www.latrobesociety.org.au

La Trobeana is published three times a year: in March, July and November. The journal publishes peer-reviewed articles, as well as other written contributions, that explore themes in the life and times of Charles Joseph La Trobe, aspects of the colonial period of Victoria's history, and the wider La Trobe family.



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FRONT COVER

Thomas Woolner, 1825-1892, sculptor
Charles Joseph La Trobe, 1853

Bronze portrait medallion showing the left profile of Charles Joseph La Trobe, diam. 24cm.

Signature and date incised in bronze l.r.: T. Woolner Sc. 1853: / M

La Trobe, Charles Joseph, 1801-1875. Accessioned 1894

Pictures Collection, State Library Victoria, H5489

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A Word from the President

Best New Year's wishes to you all. May 2022 be a very happy and successful year for the La Trobe Society and its members.

Despite the Covid-related setbacks to the Society's program during the last two years, the Committee has planned a number of events in the months ahead for your interest and enjoyment. Regrettably, the joint meeting with the Anglican Historical Society featuring a lecture by Dr Liz Rushen AM, has now been postponed until History Month in October. Details will be circulated in due course. You may view more about planned functions in Forthcoming Events later in this edition.

This first issue of *La Trobeana* for 2022 is full of interest. In her article 'C J La Trobe: Jolimont Plantsman', Helen Botham, Founding Chair of the Friends of La Trobe's Cottage, has given us the benefit of her research for her notable Friends Annual Lecture 2021. La Trobe created a beautiful garden at Jolimont and provided parks and gardens still enjoyed by the citizens of Victoria, and Helen reveals new discoveries about his life-long interest in botany.

La Trobe Society member, lawyer, philosopher, conservationist and garden historian Dr John Dwyer QC has graced the pages of our journal with his article on 'Charles Joseph La Trobe as a Romantic'. His investigation of Victoria's multi-talented Lieutenant-Governor reveals La Trobe's outlook and interests as those of a Romantic. These perspectives are expressed in his talent as a landscape artist, and in his promotion of the Romantic movement and its particular appreciation of nature in his several volumes of 'Rambles'.

Lorraine Finlay is the former Volunteer Property Manager of La Trobe's Cottage. In her paper 'John Stuart Hepburn of Smeaton

Hill', using original source material, she reveals the life of former sea-captain and, from 1838, a pastoralist at *Smeaton Hill* in the Central Highlands of the Port Phillip District, including his interactions with the Aboriginal people.

Tim Gatehouse, a retired solicitor with varied research and writing interests in the history of pre-goldrush Victoria, provides us with a fascinating account of life at the *Banyule* estate at Heidelberg, originally owned by Joseph Hawdon and regarded as one of the finest properties in the vicinity of Melbourne. Tim has previously written on *Charterisville*, the neighbouring estate owned by David Charteris McArthur, and this paper reveals much about social life in Melbourne and surrounds.

It is with great sadness that we record the unexpected death of member Peter Brown. An enthusiastic member of the La Trobe Society for the past eight years, he was a dentist by profession, and a man of many talents and interests. Indeed, he was described as a renaissance man with his many skills, and will be greatly missed by his friends in the La Trobe Society.

The first function for the year is the celebration of La Trobe's 221st birthday at La Trobe's Cottage on Sunday 20 March with Helen Botham briefly recapping her research on La Trobe's plant hunting endeavours, followed by a tour of the botanical specimens featured in the Cottage garden. I look forward to seeing many of you there.

Diane Gardiner AM
Hon. President
C J La Trobe Society



Dr Ashleigh Green

La Trobe Society Fellow 2022

It is with great pleasure that we announce the La Trobe Society Fellow for 2022. Dr Ashleigh Green was awarded the Fellowship for her research project on ‘The Construction of Gaols, Prisons and Asylums in Port Phillip and the Colony of Victoria during the La Trobe Administration (1839-1854)’. With a doctorate in Classics and Archaeology from the University of Melbourne, Ashleigh also has a deep interest in history, as demonstrated by her extensive experience as a tour guide in various historic properties in Victoria.

Dr Green’s project will investigate the planning and construction of the first purpose-built penal and psychiatric institutions in the Port Phillip District and colony of Victoria during the La Trobe era. Her research will begin with an appraisal of the earliest makeshift gaols and stockades in Melbourne, and will go on to provide an in-depth history of the construction and early administration of four key institutions, namely: Melbourne Gaol (1845), Yarra Bend Asylum (1848), Pentridge Prison (1850) and Geelong Gaol (1853).

This project is unique in offering a concerted view of the foundation of incarceration and institutional confinement in Victoria. While some examination has been carried out on the history of prisons and asylums in this state,

not enough attention has been given to the process of construction itself and what this can tell us about day-to-day life and operations in Port Phillip, later the colony of Victoria.

While primarily interested in the logistics of construction, including planning, financing and the sourcing of labour and building materials, the research will also deal with social and ideological factors that influenced their creation, and will consider public opinion on their foundation. These edifices represented a substantial investment on the part of the early colonial administration and played a significant role in shaping the settlement. Not only did the four institutions operate into the twentieth century, they also set a precedent for the design and construction of gaols, prisons and asylums in the colony that came after.

Research into how these institutions were built, their appearance in the landscape, and how they served their purpose during the La Trobe era will further the aims of the La Trobe Society in bringing to light the importance of this historical period.

We look forward to hearing from Ashleigh on her fascinating project as a guest speaker in the La Trobe Society’s program in the coming year.

C J La Trobe: Jolimont Plantsman

By Helen Botham

Helen Botham is a garden history researcher and author of *La Trobe's Jolimont: A Walk Round My Garden* (2006). She was the foundation chair of the Friends of La Trobe's Cottage and is currently Coordinator of the La Trobe's Cottage Management Team, in addition to being its garden coordinator. She has developed a special interest in La Trobe as botanist.

It is well-known that Charles Joseph La Trobe had a keen interest in his garden, a love of the outdoors and an appreciation for the natural environment. He wrote 'I am a great and ardent admirer of the works of God... from the stars of heaven to the midge sporting in the sun-beam' and 'I have seldom held a flower in my hand, which I did not think curious and beautiful enough to have bloomed in paradise'.¹

But where did this love of nature originate? A study of his early life reveals that the genesis for this may go back to his schooldays at Fulneck Moravian School in Yorkshire. Children at Moravian schools were introduced to the study of natural history and an appreciation of the creations of God at an early age. Henry Steinhauer while still a student, but later to return as a master, arranged a museum which exhibited 'a tolerable collection of valuable curiosities'.² Students were enthusiastic collectors of geological objects. This was around 1800, seven years before La Trobe started as a student there, aged six. Shortly after La Trobe arrived, Steinhauer 'a very competent field botanist', was appointed principal tutor in the higher branches of learning. And a later student commented that Steinhauer was among many gifted teachers which 'enabled this institution to afford a more liberal education than most others'.³

Waugh, in *A History of Fulneck School*, says it was the 'custom to take the boys one or two long walks every year to places of interest'.⁴ Could this have been the beginnings of La Trobe's interest in 'rambling' (the term he used in his later travel books)? John Barnes points out that 'The centrality of missionary activity in the Moravian Church encouraged an interest in other countries and peoples. In the La Trobe children this interest was all the stronger because their father was in touch with missions in such remote places as Labrador, Greenland, the West Indies, and Suriname in South America'.⁵ In 1818 his father published the journal of his tour of South Africa, where he travelled far and wide, met many people, saw many landscapes and in fact dedicated the journal to his children.⁶ Published when Charles Joseph was seventeen, perhaps it can be seen as a model for his later travel books: it describes the places Christian Ignatius visited and his reaction to them, just as Charles Joseph's books do, and, reflecting the author's interest in botany, he publishes a list of 'trees, shrubs, and plants noticed in this journal'.⁷ It includes many illustrations, some black and white drawings, and some coloured prints completed by another artist after the initial sketches by Christian Ignatius; they record his visits, just as Charles Joseph's huge folio of sketches and watercolours did later.

This was clearly where La Trobe's interest in travel was fostered. But why did La Trobe choose Switzerland to embark on his travels? We know that he had read the poetry of Lord Byron, who, as John Barnes says 'had thought Switzerland "the most Romantic region of the world"'.⁸ La Trobe quotes lines from Byron as the epigraph to the first chapter of his first travel book, *The Alpenstock*,⁹ and indicates that he may also have been influenced by the earlier Swiss writer, Jean-Jacques Rousseau—he 'quoted Byron in the dungeon of Chillon; thought of Rousseau as I passed Clarens'.¹⁰ Barnes points out that 'by the time of La Trobe's arrival in Neuchâtel the appeal of the Swiss mountain scenery for English travellers was well established'.¹¹

La Trobe's first visit to Switzerland was as a twenty-three-year-old in 1824. Of his first sight of the view across Lake Neuchâtel to the mountains beyond he later wrote: 'I cannot express in words the feelings of wonder and awe with which I gazed for that first time upon this magnificent scene'.¹² The Neuchâtel area was to become his home for several years, and he formed lasting friendships with many people in the area; he was to marry two daughters of Neuchâtel, Sophie de Montmollin in 1835, and later, after she had passed away, her sister Rose de Meuron, in 1855.

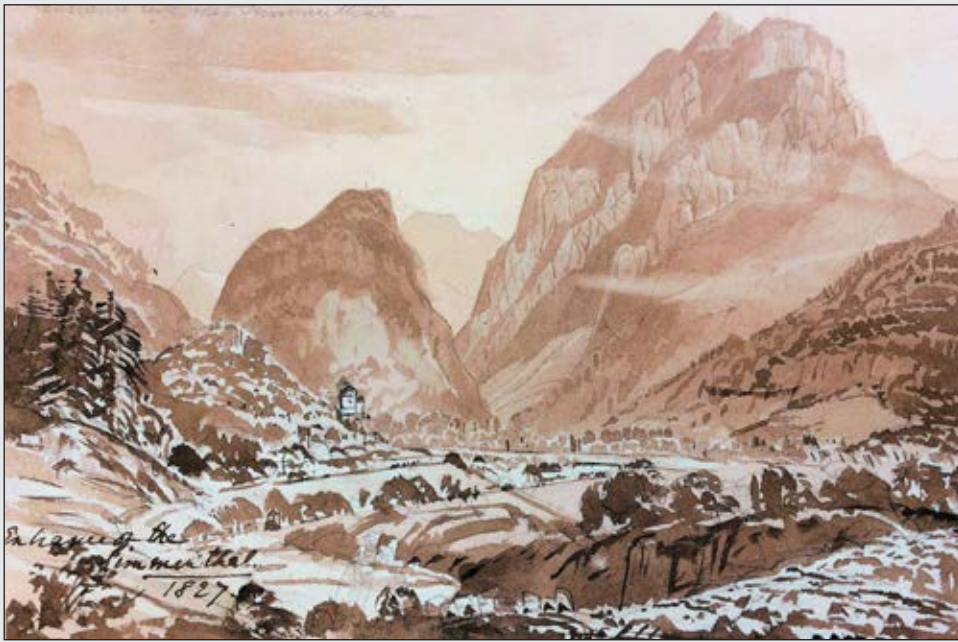
A family with whom he developed a close friendship and remained in correspondence while in Port Phillip was the Studer family in Erlenbach, south of Neuchâtel on Lake Thun. Of their home, a parsonage, still used for that purpose today, he wrote that it was 'one of those spots to which my heart clings with an affection which is interwoven with the thread of my being'.¹³ It became 'a central point from which I started for my summer rambles to every part of the country, and the home to which I always turned my steps when my object was gained'.¹⁴ Their parsonage was surrounded by 'a flower garden, stocked with many a shrub and flower, created to bloom under a far different sun and sky'.¹⁵ This beautiful garden featured plants from other lands, something which perhaps made an impression upon the young traveller. He botanised with Pastor Samuel Studer. While attempting to ascend Stockhorn with, as La Trobe called him 'my host' and 'newly-found friend',¹⁶ he noted that 'The rocks on the ridge were covered with a profusion of the beautiful flowers of the *rhododendron ferrugineum*; and our tin-cases began to fill rapidly with specimens of Alpine botany'.¹⁷ Throughout his travels he was to send seeds and plants to Pastor Studer, even during his time in Australia. He wrote in 1847 to his daughter Agnes, who was then back in Switzerland, 'tell Mr Studer when you see him



that I see many beautiful plants but cannot under present circumstances collect them'.¹⁸

La Trobe's travels through Europe and America were truly adventurous, ambitious and at times dangerous. In Europe there were days spent alone, tramping through the snow, ascending tall peaks, and, occasionally unable to find suitable shelter, spending nights outdoors. Dianne Reilly notes that he 'climbed previously unexplored mountains and crossed untraversed passes without the help of guides or porters'.¹⁹ John Barnes says that in America La Trobe and his travelling companion were 'riding across the prairies and hunting buffaloes, canoeing on rivers, risking travel by steamboat on the Mississippi and the lakes'.²⁰ They sometimes went hungry, had to walk many miles across difficult terrain as their horses were lame and starving, and had to shelter from possibly marauding Native Americans. Sylvia Whitmore writes that in Mexico, where they faced risks, discomfort and danger, it was only La Trobe's courage, judgement and ability to manage potentially dangerous situations which enabled him and his companions to leave Mexico unscathed.²¹

All the while, he was admiring the landscape and the plants in it. In *The Pedestrian* published in 1832 he says 'Perchance, while resting by the road-side, I take into my hand the first flower or insect that comes in my way, examine the structure of the one or the form and habits of the other... entirely engrossed with the wonders thus unveiled to me'.²² In *The Alpenstock*, published three years earlier, La Trobe provided



Charles Joseph La Trobe, 1801-1875, artist
Entrance of the Simmenthal, 1827

Pencil and sepia wash on paper
 Collection: National Trust of Australia (Victoria)
 Deposited on long-term loan in the Pictures Collection,
 State Library Victoria

an appendix,²³ just as his father had done in his South African Journal, giving a list of the flora of the chain of Stockhorn and Thurnen. He writes 'For these lists the writer is indebted to the friendship of M. le Pasteur Studer, of Erlenbach'.²⁴

His interest in collecting flora and fauna came to the fore in his travels in America during 1832 and 1833. He was escorting a young Swiss count, Albert de Pourtalès, on this adventure and it seems from La Trobe's letters to Albert's mother, Comtesse de Pourtalès, that she may have expressly asked him to collect as they travelled. La Trobe's letters to the Countess often refer to his seed collecting. He wrote in *The Rambler in North America*, 'The only prizes now within my reach, were seeds, for the reception of which I kept a bag at my saddle bow; and crammed into it pell-mell all that came in my way, from those of the largest tree to that of the meanest grass'.²⁵ Dianne Reilly quotes Albert who wrote to his mother from Missouri: 'La Trobe has collected more flowers here in a week than in the rest of America in five months'.²⁶ La Trobe refers to these 'glories of the autumnal Flora' in Missouri. He says: 'God has here... scattered the seeds of thousands of beautiful plants... whole districts covered with the tall and striking flowers of the red or white *Eupatorium*, and every where among the long grass, the *Liatis*... shoots up, and displays its spike of red flowers'.²⁷ (See page 10)

From the Arkansas River in December 1832, La Trobe wrote to Countess de Pourtalès: '...the seeds that I have gathered in these distant regions I shall... send to you without delay & hope that one day I may be favoured to see... the flowers of the Prairie flourishing in your garden at Greng'.²⁸ Of the seeds he sent, he wrote: 'Some are beautiful & unknown to our gardens in Europe, others only curious to the botanist... It is comparatively easy to gather, to pluck & to catch – but a very difficult matter to care for & preserve'.²⁹ These are the words of the botanist in him.

The only report of any botanising while in Mexico from January to May 1834 was while he was waiting for travel from Tampico where, armed with a bag for seeds 'No flower courted my admiring gaze in vain... I rushed into every thicket, I culled every flower, I handled everything within reach...'.³⁰ Despite this enthusiasm, attacks by 'wood bugs' and 'moschetoës', rendering him 'upon the verge of a fever' frustrated any further botanising.³¹ However, by the conclusion of his travels and his return to England in June 1834, he had accumulated a large quantity of specimens that he arranged to be delivered directly to Neuchâtel. He wrote to the Countess of 'a large box, which we brought to Havre with us & left to be forwarded direct to Neuchatel... Certain bundles of dried plants I would by right be



Franz Krüger, 1797-1857, artist
Count Frédéric de Pourtalès with
his sons Albert and Guillaume, 1836
 Pastel
 Private collection, Austria



Franz Krüger, 1797-1857, artist, attrib.
Comtesse de Pourtalès, c.1838
 Photograph of portrait
 From *Graf Albert Pourtalès*, herausg. von Albert von
 Mutius (Berlin, Propyläen-Verlag, 1933)

sending to my flower-loving friend Mr Studer of Erlenbach'.³²

Further botanising opportunities were provided by La Trobe's appointment in 1837 by the Colonial Office to inspect and report on educational provision for the freed slaves in the British West Indies (also known as the Antilles). Barnes says that before he commenced his official duties, La Trobe 'had every encouragement to take up the botanizing and insect-hunting he so enjoyed, as M de Pourtalès had provided funds for the collection of specimens to be placed in the museum in Neuchâtel'.³³ So here it seems La Trobe has the role of one of the many sponsored plant hunters of the 1800s. La Trobe also sent a collection of seeds he had collected in the Antilles 'for his friends in Switzerland' to Pastor Studer, who then distributed them to scientists including the eminent botanist Alphonse de Candolle in Geneva.³⁴

Throughout these travels, La Trobe was aware of the interest in his collections by the members of the Société des sciences naturelles de Neuchâtel. This society was formed in 1832, not long after La Trobe and Albert embarked on their journey to America, by the scientist Louis Agassiz with the goal of the advancement of science and individual development.³⁵ La Trobe was elected a member of the Society in 1837.³⁶ During his time in Neuchâtel it is probable that he would have been in contact with founding members of the Society, all respected for their expertise in the different branches

of science. The items he provided during his travels were recorded in the 'New acquisitions to the Museum' section in the Mémoires of the Society. In 1834, he provided insects from North America and Mexico;³⁷ in 1836 he sent fossils and minerals from England.³⁸ In 1837 and 1838 he sent plant seeds, shells, rocks, birds and mammals from the Antilles forming a 'vast collection' from 'these English colonies'.³⁹

Considering this background, his 1839 appointment as Superintendent of the Port Phillip District of New South Wales probably provided, in La Trobe's mind, tantalising opportunities for further adventures, exploration, expediting and collecting. During the six weeks he spent in Sydney preparing for his role in Port Phillip, despite the busy round of official business and social visits, and attending to Sophie and Agnes, there are several mentions in *Australian Notes* of the beautiful flowers: at Woolloomooloo, the Domain, the North Shore, South Head ('flora! What beauty and variety'); on walking home from an outing on 26 August, 'The flowers beautiful. Very much amused'.⁴⁰

It is no wonder that when La Trobe arrived in Port Phillip he set about creating not only his private garden, but also public spaces for the citizens to enjoy the beauties of nature. The prefabricated dwelling he brought with him became the nucleus of his permanent and much extended home. Eight months after he arrived,



Liatris pycnostachya
 Institut de Botanique, Université de Neuchâtel
 Collected by La Trobe in Missouri, 1832



Liatris pycnostachya
 The Garden, London, Vol.55, 1899, opp. page 238

La Trobe paid £250 for twelve and a half acres (five hectares), which he named *Jolimont* after the Swiss country estate owned by the Pourtalès family where he and Sophie had spent their honeymoon. A survey of the *Jolimont* estate, commissioned by La Trobe in 1853,⁴¹ reveals the extensive garden he created, exhibiting many features of European estates: a carriage drive, rockeries, parterres, walks and kitchen garden. Early drawings confirm that La Trobe initially planted his Melbourne garden to remind him of home. A pastel by Gilbert⁴² shows plants which resemble hollyhocks, annuals, roses and spring bulbs in neatly clipped ornamental geometric beds.

We know some of the plants in La Trobe's *Jolimont* garden from a list of plants sent to him by his friend Ronald Gunn in Van Diemen's Land, in April 1844,⁴³ including many seasonal annuals and bulbs: crocus, daisy, hyacinth, anemone, iris, pansies, ixias, petunias, narcissus, jonquils and daffodil. Many of these are currently growing in the La Trobe's Cottage garden. Plants were also sent, in June 1844, from the Botanic Garden in Sydney.⁴⁴ This list includes some larger trees: a *Melia azedarach* (native white cedar), six olive trees, twelve pine trees – six *Pinus pinaster* (Maritime Pine) and six *Pinus pinea* (Stone Pine) – and twelve *Quercus pedunculata* (*Quercus robur*, the common oak).

Included in the list of plants sent from the Botanic Garden in Sydney were twelve specimens of *Spartium*, now commonly known as Spanish broom. We know why he wanted twelve broom plants – a sketch he sent to daughter Agnes (now back in Switzerland)⁴⁵ features a 'Cape Broom hedge'; perhaps this was the *Spartium*. There is a specimen of a related plant, *Genista*, in the current garden.

Although initially La Trobe aimed to re-create the gardens of 'Home', it is possible that the hot dry summer in 1843–44 may have persuaded him of the value in transitioning to Mediterranean plants as evidenced in the plants sent to him from Sydney in 1844, which included olive trees, oleanders, pomegranate and broom. Sophie wrote to Agnes in 1845: 'The garden is much improved for papa has been planting a great deal – many Golden wattles, and bushes of all kinds'.⁴⁶

When William Howitt called to pay his respects in 1852, he found La Trobe's residence 'merely a small wooden cottage, but elegantly furnished, and standing in spacious grounds, exhibiting a great variety of native trees and shrubs'.⁴⁷ By this time La Trobe had undertaken many expeditions through the Port Phillip bush on horseback when his joy in the native vegetation was unbounded, and he communicated this



1 *Aotus virgata*, Herbarium, New York Botanical Garden. Part of the Meissner Collection acquired by the New York Botanical Garden in 1895. Collected by La Trobe in Port Phillip
 2 *Acacia latrobei*, Institut de Botanique, Université de Neuchâtel. Collected by La Trobe in Port Phillip in 1842; named after him by Meissner
 3 *Liatris scariosa*, Natural History Museum London, part of the Shuttleworth Collection acquired by the British Museum in 1877. La Trobe's specimen collected in Missouri in 1832 is on the right of the sheet.

through letters to his family and friends. On a very dangerous expedition in 1849 to view the new lighthouse at Cape Otway, during which he 'had a day of the most severe exertion, I ever encountered',⁴⁸ despite his fatigue and hunger he was able to appreciate, as he later told Ronald Gunn, the 'Fern Trees of great beauty' and 'two species of prostanthera which are new to me'.⁴⁹ In an earlier letter to Gunn, he said: 'going up Station Peak [now named Flinders Peak], was delighted by a beautiful species of Prostanthera which is now in full bloom among the masses of granitic rock'.⁵⁰ These letters to Gunn were

two of many in which La Trobe reported on his plant hunting to his friend. Gunn, 'the most knowledgeable botanist in Tasmania',⁵¹ collected plants for Sir William Hooker in Kew, was elected a Fellow of the Linnean Society in 1850 and a Fellow of the Royal Society of London in 1854.⁵² In his letter to Gunn in April 1853, at the height of the goldrush, La Trobe told his friend how much this correspondence meant to him: 'under the weight of official turmoil' it 'always brought with it the freshness of nature's works & doings'.⁵³



Edward La Trobe Bateman, 1816–1897, artist
Front view of Jolimont, 1853 (detail)
 Pencil and Chinese white on brown paper
 Pictures Collection, State Library Victoria H98.135/22



John Botham, photographer
Phormium tenax at La Trobe's Cottage, 2021

During his fourteen years in Port Phillip, La Trobe sent many hundreds of specimens to Switzerland which are now held in several different institutions.⁵⁴ La Trobe's own copy of *Mémoires de la Société des sciences naturelles de Neuchâtel* (1845), which he donated to the Melbourne Public Library in 1853, records that in the year 1841–42 he had sent to the Society birds, insects, shells, some shields and 127 plant species,⁵⁵ and a further similar donation in 1843–44 of birds, plants and weapons.⁵⁶ The animal specimens are today held in the Natural History Museum of Neuchâtel, and the plant specimens in the Herbarium of the Institute of Biology of the University of Neuchâtel to where they were transferred in 1918 from the Natural History Museum with all its other botanical collections. Professor Jason Grant, Director of the Herbarium, has developed a keen interest in the La Trobe specimens, which are not yet catalogued in any detail. He foresees a large project to digitise and index this collection.

Many specimens were sent by La Trobe directly to the Neuchâtel Museum, but those he sent to his friend Pastor Studer were forwarded by him to other scientists; some to Carl Meissner, Professor of Botany for nearly forty years at the University of Basel, who studied La Trobe's collections in Basel, Neuchâtel and Geneva. Pastor Studer again contacted de Candolle in Geneva. A letter dated September 1845 from Studer says: 'this is the fourth time that I share the plants of Melbourne or Port Philipp [*sic*] which I owe to the friendship of M. Latrobe'.⁵⁷ We know of ten of La Trobe's specimens held at the Conservatory and Botanical Garden of the City of Geneva – there are likely to be more.

Meissner had a great interest in Australian flora, describing and classifying hundreds of Australian species. As well as naming some specimens collected by La Trobe after him,

Acacia latrobei and *Grevillea latrobei*, Meissner created and named a new genus 'Latrobea'. The plants in this genus are native to Western Australia, and none was collected by La Trobe, but Meissner explained in *Plantae preissianae* why he named this genus:

The plants which I already suspected should be distinguished as a separate family from the Pultaneae I now make so bold as to put forward as a new genus. I would wish this genus to be distinguished by the name of the honorable Mr Latrobe, governor of the colony of Port Philipp [*sic*], an energetic explorer of its Flora which was hitherto unknown to Botany.⁵⁸

This two-volume work published in 1844 and 1847, with an extended title (translated) *A List of the Plants collected in Western and South Western Australia, collected in the years 1838–1841 by Ludwig Preiss*, includes notes by Meissner to twenty-two of the entries,⁵⁹ saying that specimens of these plants had also been collected by La Trobe in Port Phillip and that most of these were held at the Herbarium at the Museum of Neuchâtel. For example: *Acacia melanoxylon* (Australian Blackwood): 'I have seen in the Botanical Museum at Neuchatel one which was collected by the honourable Latrobe at Port Philipp towards the east on the southern shore of Australia.'⁶⁰

Carl Meissner sold his personal herbarium, including some specimens collected by La Trobe, to John J. Crooke in 1872.⁶¹ It was then donated to the Torrey Herbarium at Columbia University and was later transferred on permanent loan to the New York Botanical Garden,⁶² so specimens collected by La Trobe are now found in the New York Botanical Garden Herbarium. A blue label on many of



Edward La Trobe Bateman, 1816–1897, artist
The detached Cottage, Jolimont 1853 (detail)
 Pencil and Chinese white on brown paper
 Pictures Collection, State Library Victoria H98.135/3



John Botham, photographer
Melianthus major at La Trobe's Cottage, 2021

these specimens states that the donor was 'Dom. Sam Studer' in 1852.

There are also several specimens, collected by La Trobe in America and in Port Phillip, held at the Natural History Museum in London. These were sent by Studer to the British-born but Bern-based botanist Robert Shuttleworth, whose personal herbarium was acquired by the British Museum in 1877.⁶³ Studer was well acquainted with Shuttleworth; Shuttleworth and his colleague Heinrich Guthnick had visited Studer in Erlenbach with La Trobe in June 1835.⁶⁴

Currently in the Cottage garden, La Trobe's interest in Australian native plants is represented by some varieties he collected in the bush, and some he talked about in letters. There are six plants whose original species name was *latrobei*/*latrobeana*. As previously mentioned, *Acacia latrobei* (picture page 11) was named by Meissner. La Trobe writing to Ronald Gunn in October 1852 about Ferdinand Mueller, who, he wrote, 'seems to be more of a botanist than any man I have hitherto met with in the Colony', went on to say: 'he tells me that an exceedingly pretty dwarf acacia flowering most abundantly in its native soil at *Jolimont* has been distinguished by my name... so you see I am likely to go down to posterity'.⁶⁵ However, unbeknown to Mueller and Meissner, the English botanist John Lindley had named this plant *Acacia acinacea* by 1838.⁶⁶ Commonly known as the Gold Dust Wattle, we have three specimens of it in the garden, and they flower magnificently in the early Spring.

Eremophila latrobei was named by Ferdinand Mueller who wrote in 1859: 'A noble species, well worthy of bearing the name of the excellent Charl. Jos. La Trobe, a great patron of Botany,

and to whose love for science the botanical department under my administration owes its origin'.⁶⁷ *Tecoma latrobei*, named after La Trobe by Mueller, is now known as *Pandorea pandorana*, the Wonga Wonga Vine. Mueller wrote to Sir William Hooker: 'My *Tecoma Latrobei* will most likely be drawn to *Tecoma Australis*, for which I shall be so very sorry, as I have named it in acknowledgement of the kind support I received from my patron'.⁶⁸ *Correa lawrenceana* var. *latrobeana* was originally named *Correa latrobeana* by Mueller in 1853; his specimen is held in the Herbarium of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne. *Grevillea latrobei* was named by Meissner, on receipt of La Trobe's specimen sent to him by Pastor Studer; and *Glycine latrobeana*, originally named *Zichya latrobeana* by Meissner, was renamed by English botanist George Bentham in 1864.⁶⁹ La Trobe's specimen, collected in Port Phillip in 1841, is currently on loan to the Australian National Herbarium in Canberra, from the New York Botanical Garden.

A study of the twenty-two drawings by Edward La Trobe Bateman, renowned botanical artist and later garden designer, provides information about the plants La Trobe grew. Bateman was the Lieutenant-Governor's first cousin, who had arrived in Melbourne in late 1852, and whom La Trobe had asked to 'provide a series of views of his beloved cottage and garden... as a memento'.⁷⁰

The drawing of the entry gates to the *Jolimont* estate shows the large rockery featuring a bank of abundant succulents. In early Melbourne there was great interest among gardeners in exotic succulents and it seems that La Trobe acquired some while on official business in Sydney in late 1846. He spent six weeks there in order to meet Governor Gipps' successor Sir Charles FitzRoy. Sophie wrote to Agnes

in December 1846 'Papa brought cacti from Sydney'.⁷¹ La Trobe told Agnes in January 1848: 'I think the only important addition I have made to my garden is a pretty rockery – for the sake of various rock plants which I got from Sydney & cacti. This has succeeded very well & is ornamental.'⁷² By December 1850, 'All the fine cactus tribe of which I have a great variety are going out of flower on the rockeries'.⁷³ Some of the succulents in the *Lower Rockery* drawing can be identified, and are replicated in the current Cottage garden.

The only recognisable plant in *Front View of Jolimont* is *Phormium tenax* (New Zealand Flax, see page 12). This was among the plants sent to La Trobe by Ronald Gunn in 1844, and Governor Gipps promised to collect some for La Trobe from Norfolk Island when Gipps visited there in March 1843: 'No good plants of *Phormium tenax* are to be had here – but I will get some from Norfolk Isld. when I go there'.⁷⁴ The modern cultivars in the current Cottage garden represent the flax that was a common garden plant at that time.

La Trobe's greenhouse, built in 1851, was the last addition to the house. Sarah Bunbury had written in 1842: 'It is a pleasure to give Mr La Trobe seeds, for he is an excellent botanist and a first rate gardener'.⁷⁵ Before the greenhouse was built he 'used to have a frame with some seeds and plants'⁷⁶ which was removed when the Detached Cottage was brought from Shortland's Bluff (Queenscliff) to the *Jolimont* estate in 1848. The addition of the greenhouse, after his lifetime passion for seed-collecting, must have at last provided La Trobe with a place to potter with his seeds.

Bateman's drawing of the Detached Cottage shows a plant likely to be *Pelargonium tomentosum*. Perhaps it was grown from seed requested by La Trobe when he wrote to his brother in England in 1844: 'Pray send us occasionally a few of the rarer seeds: I particularly wish you would slip into your letters a pinch of pelargonium seed... which grow marvelously well here'.⁷⁷ By 1852, La Trobe had, near his dressing room, 'quite a wall of beautiful geraniums before me'.⁷⁸ Currently *Pelargonium tomentosum*, grown from cuttings taken from a plant growing near the remnants of the original residence at *Jolimont*, flowers every spring. Outside the Detached Cottage, we see what we believe is *Melianthus major*; this was very common in early gardens. We have a couple of specimens of it in the garden (see page 13).

We know La Trobe loved roses. He would have missed the rose-flowering season of 1846–47; he was in Van Diemen's Land as

Acting Governor. But James Graham reported on their condition in his absence: 'There is a great show of roses just now but they have got a little blighted by the hot winds which have prevailed very much since you left'.⁷⁹ Ronald Gunn sent him some roses in 1848,⁸⁰ the same year that La Trobe was sent eleven roses in a Wardian case from the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, in London.⁸¹ But the largest order of roses for *Jolimont* was sent from Sydney in 1851: twenty-two roses were included in an order of 173 plants from Macarthur's Camden Nursery near Sydney.⁸² This is likely to be the result of a personal visit by La Trobe to the Camden Nursery; he had been in Sydney carrying out official duties in preparation for the transition to the new colony of Victoria. What a tonic it must have been for him to take some time out to select plants from the beautiful Camden Nursery. The plants arrived with him, as soon-to be Lieutenant-Governor of the newly declared Colony of Victoria, on the steamer *Shamrock*, docking at Queens Wharf on 10 May 1851.⁸³ The roses would have been packed bare-rooted, and they must have flowered well in the rose-flowering season eighteen months later, as he wrote to Agnes in November 1852 'Jolimont is very beautiful just at present, so green & full of roses and other flowers'.⁸⁴ Only a few of those on this list are available today, and two of these have been planted recently: Baronne Prévost and Coupe d'Hébé.

The list from Camden includes fifteen varieties of *Camellia*, some of which are currently growing in the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne: *Camellia Japonica alba plena*, *Camellia Japonica paeoniiflora*, *Camellia Japonica spectabilis* and *Camellia japonica Anemoniflora rubra*. A specimen of this last variety, propagated by the Royal Botanic Gardens, has been growing in the Cottage garden since 2013.

The list from Camden includes begonias, spirea, gardenias, daphne, plumbago, rondeletia, philadelphus, weigelia, salvias (splendens and patens), magnolia, iochroma, azaleas, buddleia, justicia, bouvardia and clematis. Many of these are present in the current garden, sourced by our original garden coordinator Sandi Pullman as she recreated La Trobe's garden.

La Trobe did not keep all his plants to himself; he was active in supporting his friends and neighbours as they developed their gardens. La Trobe's agent James Graham told Dr Edward Barker of Cape Schanck 'I forgot to mention that I got a number of cuttings etc for you from Mr La Trobe... which I had forwarded along with the rest of your things'.⁸⁵ And La Trobe assisted Mrs Perry, the wife of the first Anglican bishop of Melbourne, as she embarked on



Acacia homalophylla, Violet wood La Trobe,
Australia, 1854
Economic Botany Collection,
Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

creating the garden at Bishopscourt. Mrs Perry wrote, just after she and the bishop had arrived in early 1848: 'Mr [La Trobe] says, as soon as we get a garden, he will set to work to get it into order for us. He is going to take our seeds (if our garden is not forthcoming before sowing time) and appropriate a bed in his garden to them, to be called Mrs [Perry]'s bed. Is it not kind?'⁸⁶ La Trobe also enlisted the help of Ronald Gunn whom he asked to 'send me by the return boat the lists of seeds & shrubs etc. of your gardener and seedsman... my neighbour Mrs Perry is at a loss who to apply to, to furnish her with the requisite shrubs etc for her new garden'.⁸⁷

La Trobe actively helped Georgiana McCrae with her garden at *Mayfield*. He supplied cuttings of 'creepers, climbers and geraniums' in June 1842, and in August that year he showed her gardener, Osmond, how to plant vine cuttings. In June 1843 he brought flower roots for Mrs McCrae's garden. In July 1844 she planted cuttings sent by La Trobe.⁸⁸

When La Trobe left Victoria in May 1854, he left a colony well-endowed with public and private gardens. He was to write, eleven years later: 'I think the... people of Melbourne may have some appreciation for the foresight... which has

secured them their ample means of recreation – Botanic Gardens & Parks on both sides of the Yarra – I have nothing on my conscience on that score.'⁸⁹

He left Port Phillip carrying seeds, plants and documents from Dr Mueller to Sir William Hooker at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. Mueller wrote to Sir William on 28 April 1854: 'Mr La Trobe promises... to deliver... about 100 kinds of seeds and some specimens.'⁹⁰ La Trobe also brought to Kew from Australia some logs of a myall (acacia) as a personal gift for Lady Hooker.⁹¹ He wrote:

London 28 Nov 1854. My dear Sir William I have deposited with my agent... a log of the *Myall* or Violet wood & would ask Lady Hookers acceptance of it... Its perfume, if veneered & used as the lining of desks or drawers, may recommend it to favour... It is I believe an acacia, & grows in the interior of Victoria & N. S. Wales, in considerable abundance.⁹²

One of these logs, labelled *Acacia homalophylla*, is held in the Economic Botany Collection at Kew.⁹³ It is indeed known for its scented wood, hence the name Violet Wood.

La Trobe remained in correspondence with Mueller. In 1859, Mueller acknowledged La Trobe's role in supporting 'my work on the plants of Victoria which you... so kindly fully & generously initiated'.⁹⁴ And La Trobe wrote to Mueller his 'valued old friend' in 1865, sending him 'a few parcels of interesting other plants'. La Trobe sent these via Augustus Tulk at the Melbourne Public Library in anticipation of 'some depository of Botanical Specimens accessible to the public'.⁹⁵

On his return to England La Trobe and his family lived in several large houses with spacious gardens; these were rented, as he never owned another house. For the last eight years of his life La Trobe lived at *Clapham House* in Sussex, which still has a beautiful garden. Although he had become blind, he revelled in scents and sounds of the outdoors. He wrote to James Graham in April 1866: 'We are fairly now in spring weather & I can smell the violets & primroses which my children gather for me even if I cannot see them.'⁹⁶ Agnes wrote to a cousin in Germany in 1870 that despite his blindness, La Trobe walked alone all about the garden.⁹⁷ He still loved to experience the joys of nature.

La Trobe's botanical legacy lives on: in the many plants he collected held in various

herbaria around the world, in those named after him, and the fact that Victoria, with its beautiful botanic gardens, became known as the Garden State. And, we hope, at La Trobe's Cottage, where we aim to continue the work started by Sandi Pullman, sourcing appropriate plants to

recreate a garden he described to Agnes as: 'most beautiful – full of flowers, & the verandah so full of fine geraniums... in full flower that everybody said it worth coming to see'.⁹⁸



Edward La Trobe Bateman, 1816-1897, artist
The tool house, Jolimont, 1853 (detail)
Pencil and Chinese white on brown paper
Pictures Collection, State Library Victoria H98.135/14

Acknowledgement

I would like to acknowledge the advice and support of Professor Jason Grant, Director of the Herbarium at the Institute of Biology of the University of Neuchâtel, in preparing this article.

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Charles Joseph La Trobe as a Romantic

By Dr John Dwyer

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The background of Charles Joseph La Trobe, who arrived as Superintendent of the Port Phillip District in 1839, was very unusual for a colonial administrator. He had no military experience but, coming from a cultured religious family, was a man of high principles and strong cultural interests that included music, art, geology and botany. His family were well settled in England but retained Continental connections through the Moravian Church. The son and grandson of Moravian clergymen, he became a teacher at a Moravian school near Manchester, and then spent nearly three years at Neuchâtel in Switzerland. He became an enthusiastic mountain walker, producing his first two books, *The Alpenstock: Or, Sketches of Swiss Scenery and Manners 1825-26* (1829) and *The Pedestrian: A Summer's Ramble in the Tyrol and some of the Adjacent Provinces 1830* (1832). These can be seen as part of the growing Romantic movement, with its feeling for and appreciation of the sublime in nature. Byron is generally regarded as one of the great Romantic poets, and La Trobe demonstrated his regard by including quotations from *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* as epigraphs to chapters of *The Alpenstock*. As shall be shown in this article, La Trobe's outlook and interests were those of a Romantic.

Romanticism is hard to define. For the English philosopher Anthony Quinton (1925-2010) it was a 'cluster of attitudes and preferences, each of which is usually to be found with a good number of the others and, in extreme cases, with most, or even all, of them.' He continued:

The Romantic favours the concrete over the abstract, variety over uniformity, the infinite over the finite, nature over culture, convention, and artifice, the organic over the mechanical, freedom over constraint, rules, and limitations. In human terms it prefers the unique individual to the average man, the free creative genius to the prudent man of good sense, the particular community or nation to humanity at large. Mentally the Romantic prefers feeling to thought, more specifically, emotion to calculation, imagination to literal common-sense, intuition to intellect. This fairly coherent array of preferences is fleshed out in all sorts of specific ways: in literature, art, and music...¹

Emile Legouis (1861-1937), Professor of English Literature at the Sorbonne, saw Romanticism as essentially poetic: 'It took up

the study of man with the means proper to the poet and applied itself to that aspect of light and shade in the soul which the philosophers had thought negligible. The mysterious regions of instinct, of feeling and the senses, and the subtle relations between man and Nature, were the chosen objects of its scrutiny.² But others found that the Romantic movement was expressed much more widely – in other forms of literature, in the arts and in society generally.

From the perspective of the cultural historian there is nothing remarkable about the suggestion that La Trobe belongs in the Romantic era. Jacques Barzun claimed that ‘romanticism can be defined as comprising those Europeans whose birth falls between 1770 and 1815, and who achieved distinction in philosophy, statecraft, and the arts during the first half of the nineteenth century’.³ It was the zeitgeist of this era, a state of consciousness. As Barzun put it, ‘What began as a cluster of movements became the spirit of an age.’⁴ La Trobe, born in 1801, was thus a man of his times. But mere chronology is not the only consideration.

Blaise Pascal’s aphorism ‘The heart has its reasons which are unknown to reason’ (*Pensées* 1660) might be thought to pre-figure Romanticism, but it is more often claimed to have begun with the writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778). As Paul Johnson wrote, ‘He popularised and to some extent invented the cult of nature, the taste for the open air, the quest for freshness, spontaneity, the invigorating and the natural’.⁵ Simon Schama has further described Rousseau’s *Confessions* (1782) as ‘the Bible of thoughtful pedestrians’,⁶ while his earlier *Reveries of the Solitary Walker* (1762) contained ten disquisitions (or discussions) each in the form of a promenade or walk taken in solitude.

As so often in the history of ideas, precursors to the Romantic movement may be found in earlier writers. Torrance’s anthology *Encompassing Nature* gathered passages prefiguring Romanticism from eighteenth-century English writers such as Bishop Berkeley, Dr Johnson, and Gilbert White, as well as Rousseau, and the American, William Bartram.⁷ Bishop Berkeley’s *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous*, first published in 1719, contains the following:

‘Look! Are not the fields covered with a delightful verdure? Is there not something in the woods and groves, in the rivers and clear springs, that soothes, that delights, that transports the soul? At the prospect of the wide and deep ocean, or some huge mountain whose top is lost in the clouds, or of an old gloomy forest, are



William Brockendon, 1787–1854, artist
Charles Joseph La Trobe, 1835
 Black, red and brown chalk on paper
 National Portrait Gallery, London

not our minds filled with a pleasing horror? Even in rocks and deserts, is there not an agreeable wildness? How sincere a pleasure is it to behold the natural beauties of the earth!’⁸

Gilbert White’s *The Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne* (1789) was widely influential in shaping views of human interaction with nature. His book combined close observation of the natural world with an intense emotional response.

In *The Idea of Wilderness* (1991), Max Oelschlaeger places Rousseau as a harbinger of the Romantic attitude:

Rousseau’s praise of the sublimity of the Alps and their effect on the soul stimulated a generation of artists and poets. He had been influenced in his thinking by natural theologians, who had attempted to account for the mountains, deserts, dark forests, and other seemingly godforsaken areas devoid of civilization. Such geographical features had long been a theological problem, for they embodied an imperfection of the earth. How could the Supreme Being, possessing omnipotent power, allow such randomness and irregularity? The physico-theologists answered this question by distinguishing the beautiful and the sublime. The beautiful elements of nature expressed God’s care and benevolence, while the wild



Charles Joseph La Trobe, 1801–1875, artist
Near Heiligen Blut, Carinthia, 1830
 Pencil and sepia wash on paper
 Collection: National Trust of Australia (Victoria)
 Deposited on long-term loan in the Pictures Collection,
 State Library Victoria

(sublime) elements, such as mountains and hurricanes, represented his power and capacity for wrath.⁹

As has often been recognised, ‘a religious note was, and is, never very far from many accounts of sublimity.’¹⁰ As Schama wrote in *Landscape and Memory* (1995), ‘The Swiss Alps were not just the temple of sublimity. To their growing band of admirers and myth makers of the 18th century, they were also a seat of virtue.’¹¹

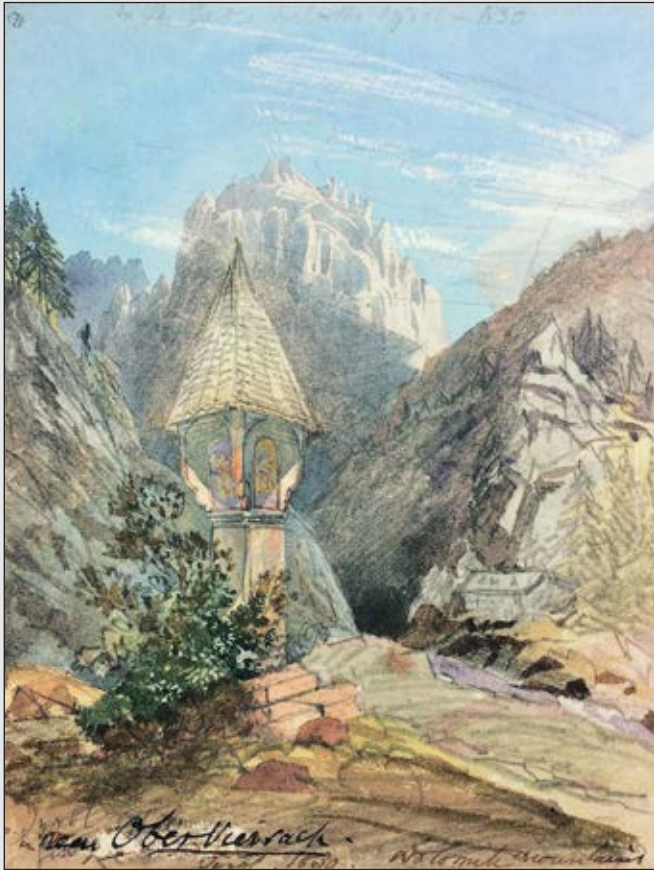
Oeschlager argued that Kant’s *Critique of Judgment*, the third critique, ‘opens the door to Romanticism generally, and to Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Shelley in particular.’¹² Accepting that Coleridge was the key influence in bringing Kant to England, he accepts also that Coleridge’s influence on Ralph Waldo Emerson brought the Romantic outlook to America.¹³ Quinton summarised Kant’s role as follows: ‘Kant created philosophical romanticism, although he was himself only very marginally and partially a Romantic.’¹⁴

John Barnes recognised in his biography of La Trobe that he had absorbed the attitudes of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the Romantic poets, ‘for whom the contemplation of mountains offered a sense of the “sublime”’,

adding: ‘This artistic concept was now applied to the experience of loftiness and grandeur in nature, out of which came the purification and enlargement of individual feeling.’¹⁵ Barnes’ use of inverted commas seems to indicate that he has some hesitation about references to the sublime. The Romantics did not regard the sublime as a mere artistic concept, but as a reality for those of religious faith.

La Trobe’s passion for rambles is well known,¹⁶ and walking was characteristic of the Romantics.¹⁷ He may not have equalled the feats of John ‘Walking’ Stewart, who in 1783 walked home to England from India, the culmination of several other walking expeditions, to become a minor celebrity and ‘a fixture at Romantic suppers’.¹⁸ Similarly Wordsworth who, as Thomas De Quincy calculated, had walked about 180,000 miles (290,000 kilometres) during his lifetime.¹⁹ Nevertheless, La Trobe was like them in his enjoyment of vigorous outdoor pursuits.

Examples of the Romantic preference for solitary walks abound, such as Wordsworth’s lines from the Fourth Book of *The Prelude* (1805): A favourite pleasure hath it been with me/ From time of earliest youth, to walk alone/ Along the public Way...²⁰



Charles Joseph La Trobe,
1801–1875, artist
Near Oberviersach, Tyrol,
Dolomite Mountains, 1830
Watercolour on paper
Collection: National Trust of
Australia (Victoria)
Deposited on long-term loan in the
Pictures Collection,
State Library Victoria

Literary studies during the Romantic era also explored the nature and value of solitude. *Fears in Solitude* (1798), which included the much anthologised *Frost at Midnight*, was an early publication of Coleridge. Zimmermann's *Solitude: considered, with respect to its influence upon the Mind and the Heart*, first published in London in 1797, was in its seventh edition by 1847.

La Trobe's enjoyment of solitude was revealed in *The Pedestrian*, when he described himself as 'entering upon the relation of a solitary journey'.²¹ Barnes questions whether La Trobe's choosing to travel alone is an indication that he was seeking solitude; rather, he could not afford the luxury of hiring guides.²² But there is certainly evidence that during the ninety-four journeys which La Trobe accomplished on horseback and by foot in Victoria he sometimes arranged a spell when he was unaccompanied. His diary entry for 15 September 1842 refers to his 'ordinary way of going to Geelong' by riding over the Werribee plains and added 'I had from the first a passion for the plains, & for my solitary hard rides across them, & retained it to the last'.²³ During his final tour of the goldfields in 1853, on 'an idle day, Resting the horses', he ascended Ben Nevis on the morning of 22 April (making a sketch of it, see page 28) and two days later

noted: 'Go & lunch alone on the spur leading up Ben Cruachan, & then met my companions'.²⁴

Several passages in La Trobe's first book, *The Alpenstock*, demonstrate his Romantic sensibility. There are also strong similarities between this work and Coleridge's writings about his response to the sublime beauties of nature. We may take as examples two passages from Coleridge, although these were not published until 1895. The first is in a letter to his wife Sarah Coleridge,²⁵ dated 4 January 1799 written during his travels to Germany in 1798 which culminated in a tour of the Hartz Mountains:

In October Ratzeburg used at sunset to appear completely beautiful. A deep red light spread over all, in complete harmony with the red town, the brown-red woods, and the yellow-red reeds on the skirts of the lake and on the slip of land. A few boats, paddled by single persons, used generally to be floating up and down in the rich light. But when first the ice fell on the lake, and the whole lake was frozen one large piece of thick transparent glass – O my God! What sublime scenery

I have beheld. Of a morning I have seen the little lake covered with mist; when the sun peeped over the hills the mist broke in the middle, and at last stood as the waters of the Red Sea are said to have done when the Israelites passed; and between these two walls of mist the sunlight burst upon the ice in a straight road of golden fire, all across the lake, intolerably bright, and the walls of mist partaking of the light in a *multitude* of colours.²⁶

The other passage is in Coleridge's letter to his friend Sara Hutchinson dated 25 August 1802, describing the waterfall known as Moss Force near Keswick in the Lake District:

...It is indeed so fearfully savage, and black, and jagged, that it tears the flood to pieces – and one great black Outjutment divides the water, and

overbrows and keeps uncovered a long slip of jagged black Rock beneath, which gives a marked *Character* to the whole force. What a sight it is to look down on such a Cataract! – the wheels, that circumsolve in it – the leaping up and plunging forward of that infinity of Pearls and Glass Bulbs – the continual *change* of the *Matter*, the perpetual *Sameness* of the *Form* – it is an awful Image and Shadow of God and the World.²⁷

It was nevertheless through poetry rather than prose that Coleridge and Wordsworth's Romantic ideas about nature became publicly influential, in particular *Lyrical Ballads* which they published jointly in 1798. Coleridge's *Hymn before Sun-rise, in the Vale of Chamouni*, first published in 1802 and often re-published, is a fuller expression of his ideas:

...And you, ye five wild torrents fiercely glad!
Who called you forth from night and utter death,
From dark and icy caverns called you forth,
Down those precipitous, black, jagged rocks,
For ever shattered and the same forever?
Who gave you your invulnerable life,
Your strength, your speed, your fury, and your joy,
Unceasing thunder and eternal foam?
And who commanded (and still the silence came),
Here let the billows stiffen, and have rest?

Ye Ice-falls! Ye that from the mountain's brow
Adown enormous ravines slope amain—
Torrents, methinks, that heard a mighty voice,
And stopped at once amid their maddest plunge!
Motionless torrents! Silent cataracts!
Who made you glorious as the Gates of Heaven
Beneath the keen full moon? Who bade the sun
Clothe you with rainbows? Who with living flowers
Of loveliest blue, spread garlands at your feet? —
GOD! Let the torrents, like a shout of nations,
Answer! And let the ice-plains echo, GOD!...²⁸

Equally, La Trobe may have read Wordsworth's *A Description of the Scenery of the Lakes in the North of England* (1810) written as an introduction to Joseph Wilkinson's *Select Views in Cumberland, Westmoreland and Lancashire* and separately published in 1822.²⁹ That he was imbued with the ideas of the Romantic movement can be shown by a passage from *The Alpenstock*, which begins with sunset near Lake Neuchâtel:

The sun was just sinking towards the western horizon, throwing his beams horizontally over the whole length of the wide sheet of water, whose short interrupted waves rebounded from

the masonry of the terrace, and from the Crêt, a small rocky knoll at its termination...

Across the lake, the horizon was formed of one unbroken and widely extended chain of mountains; from the Alps of Savoy on the south, to the rocky summits in the vicinity of the lake of the Four Cantons, far to the eastward: ridge above ridge, peak above peak; their snows glowing with the red hue of an autumnal sun, which every moment rendered more intense and more beautiful.



Charles Joseph La Trobe, 1801–1875, artist
The Pulpit, Cape Schanck, 1848

Watercolour on paper
 Collection: National Trust of Australia (Victoria)
 Deposited on long-term loan in the Pictures Collection,
 State Library Victoria

I cannot express in words the feeling of wonder and awe with which I gazed for that first time upon this magnificent scene; the sense of exultation, with which my eye measured the successive heights as they rose from the steep shores of the lake, till surmounted by the towering glaciers of the central chain; or the involuntary impulse to adore and glorify the Creator of heaven and earth, which rose in my breast, in the presence of these stupendous and magnificent monuments of his power.³⁰

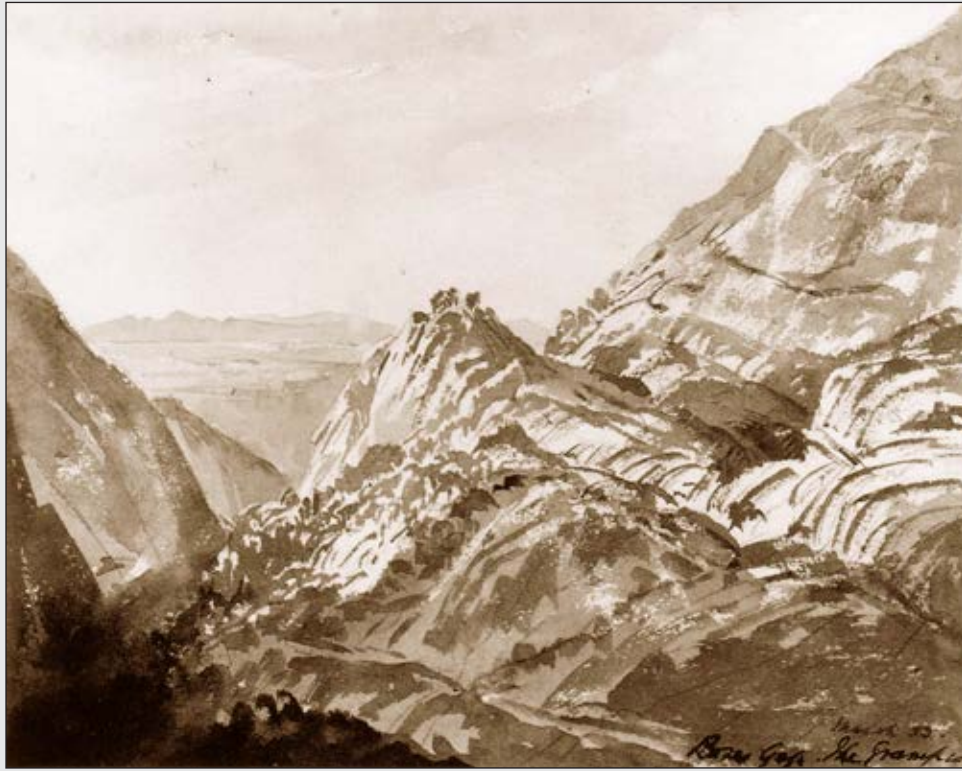
Such words, expressing La Trobe's Romantic sensibility, could as well have been written by Coleridge.

La Trobe's appreciation of the beauties of nature as the work of God was not unusual. Similar feeling appears, for example, in twenty-year-old Sarah Midgley's diary record of her impressions on arriving at Hobson's Bay on 11 September 1851: 'The country around appeared romantic and beautiful, the large forests, extensive plains and high mountains in every direction all in their wild state, showed in the wonderful work of creation the hand of Almighty God.'³¹

La Trobe's talent as a landscape artist was

another expression of his Romantic feeling. In this he was to an extent following family tradition. His uncle Benjamin Henry Latrobe (1764–1820) was a neoclassical architect who practised in England and in the newly-formed United States of America, completing the Capitol building in Washington, and executing the renovation of the White House after the War of 1812–1815 among other noted works.³² He was also a landscape painter, writing in 1798–1799 *An Essay on Landscape* illustrated by twenty-four watercolours painted in Richmond, Virginia. In this work, in which he expounds on British theories of the picturesque and their potential adaptation to America's distinctive topography, he commences: 'I find nothing so instructive as the contemplation of the works of creation'.³³ Charles Joseph La Trobe had, no doubt, absorbed much of the Romantic sensibility to nature through the traditions of his own family and, in particular, through the influence of his uncle's poetic *Essay*. He may have seen himself in the long tradition of 'voyageurs' like Rousseau and other writers whose works demonstrated their affinity with the natural world.³⁴

Another Romantic in the family was La Trobe's cousin Edward La Trobe Bateman (1816–1897), a botanical and landscape artist and illustrator, associated with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood including, in particular, John



Charles Joseph La Trobe, 1801-1875, artist
Rose's Gap, The Grampians, 1850

Sepia wash on paper

Collection: National Trust of Australia (Victoria)

Deposited on long-term loan in the Pictures Collection,
 State Library Victoria

'The scenery of the Gap or opening in this part of the Grampians range is really very fine. I am more & more charmed with the scenery of these mountains', Letter to Sophie La Trobe, 14 March 1848.

La Trobe's letters and sketches attest to his great enthusiasm for the Grampians, the only Australian landscape he compared to his peerless Switzerland (Victoria Hammond, 1999).

Everett Millais. He came to the Victorian goldfields in 1852, and in 1853 provided illustrations of La Trobe's house and garden at Jolimont, East Melbourne, commissioned as La Trobe was about to return to Britain. His later work in Victoria as a landscape designer, noted for his use of native plants, included designs for the grounds of the University of Melbourne (1855-1864) and Rippon Lea at Elsternwick.³⁵

After publishing *The Pedestrian*, his second book about the Alps, in 1832, La Trobe visited North America where he made a six-month journey in company with the American author and diplomat, Washington Irving, publishing *The Rambler in North America 1832-1833* in 1835. Irving's own account includes the often quoted description of his fellow-traveller:

Mr. L an Englishman by birth, but descended from a foreign stock; and who had all the buoyancy and accommodating spirit of a native of the

Continent. Having rambled over many countries he had become to a certain degree, a citizen of the world, easily adapting himself to any change. He was a man of a thousand occupations; a botanist, a geologist, a hunter of beetles and butterflies, a musical amateur, a sketcher of no mean pretensions; in short a complete virtuoso; added to which he was a very indefatigable, if not always a very successful, sportsman. Never had a man more irons in the fire; and, consequently, never was a man more busy or more cheerful.³⁶

The qualities set out by Irving are similar to Coleridge's ideal program for the preparation of a great poet, as quoted by Byatt from Coleridge's letter to Joseph Cottle, the publisher of *Lyrical Ballads*.³⁷ Irving, while in England, moved in literary and artistic circles which included the Romantics. There is an engraving by Charles Mottram of a breakfast party given by the poet

and banker Samuel Rogers in 1815, attended by Irving. The company included R.B. Sheridan, Thomas Moore, Wordsworth, Robert Southey, Coleridge, Lord Byron, Sir Walter Scott, Sydney Smith and J.M.W. Turner.³⁸ J.M.W. Turner has been described as 'the one distinguished Romantic English painter'.³⁹

In writing books about his rambles, La Trobe was an early promoter of the growing popularity of the Romantic movement and its quasi-religious appreciation of wild nature. His fourth publication, *The Rambler in Mexico 1834* (1836), had the distinction of being cited extensively by W.H. Prescott in his classic work, *The History of the Conquest of Mexico*. Prescott wrote, 'Of recent tourists no-one has given a more gorgeous picture of the impressions made where we can judge, are distinguished by a sobriety and fairness that entitle him to confidence in his delineation of other countries'.⁴⁰

La Trobe's interest in natural history and botany was fully recognised in 1837 when he had been elected a member of the Society of Natural Sciences of Neuchâtel which Louis Agassiz had established.⁴¹ His circle in Port Phillip included the physician and naturalist Edmund Charles Hobson from his arrival in Melbourne in 1840 until his death in 1848.⁴² A long-standing friend and correspondent from 1844, if not earlier, was Ronald Gunn of Van Diemen's Land.⁴³ When La Trobe was acting Lieutenant-Governor of Van Diemen's Land in 1846-7, the relationship blossomed with their correspondence between 1847 and 1864 largely concerning scientific matters and the exchange of seeds, plants, and botanical specimens.⁴⁴

Ronald Gunn (1808-1881), the former private secretary to Sir John Franklin, was a public servant and politician, and editor of the *Tasmanian Journal of Natural Science*.⁴⁵ He was a first-rate botanist whose collections were to be used by Joseph Hooker in compiling his *Flora Tasmaniae* (1859). In an 1852 letter to Gunn La Trobe commented that he did not have 'much time for natural history – however my interest in it is unabated & I am always glad to get hold of anyone who knows anything about

it & is observant'.⁴⁶ Again in August 1853, La Trobe wrote, 'I reciprocate, I assure you, all your friendly expressions of regard, and you may believe that nothing had been more cheering to my spirit during my long exile, and under the weight of official turmoil than my personal or epistolary intercourse with you, which always brought with it the freshness of nature's works & doings'.⁴⁷

La Trobe possessed to a high degree the love of nature that was a significant feature of Romanticism. When the historian Kathleen Fitzpatrick gave an account of La Trobe's achievements in an oration to mark the hundredth anniversary of his death, she emphasised the values that were manifested in the appointment of Ferdinand Mueller as Government Botanist, the founding of the Royal Botanic Gardens, the reservation of land for the establishment of the University of Melbourne and the foundation of the Melbourne Public Library (later State Library Victoria), and the reservation of parks and gardens. As she said:

Imagine what Melbourne would be like without the Botanic Gardens and the Fitzroy and Exhibition Gardens, without the Domain, Prince's Park, Yarra Park and Royal Park. All these we owe to La Trobe's vision of the future needs of Melbourne, and to the action he took to reserve them for public purposes. Without La Trobe's reservations, all of these parks and gardens would probably have fallen into the hands of speculative builders during the period of amazing growth which followed the gold discoveries.⁴⁸

She pointed out that while some of the parks had since become much smaller, the 'heritage with which La Trobe endowed Melbourne has shrunk because it was not sufficiently prized by those who should have been its trustees for posterity, but it remains a noble fortune'.⁴⁹ That these should be the enduring features of La Trobe's legacy is entirely in keeping with his character as a Romantic.

Endnotes

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- 46 L.J. Blake (ed.), *Letters of Charles Joseph La Trobe*. Melbourne: Government Printer, 1975, p.41 (8 October 1852).
- 47 Ibid, p.42 (13 August 1853).
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49 Ibid. ("The Carlton Gardens... lost twenty of its sixty acres when the Exhibition was built. Prince's Park has shrunk from 2,560 acres to less than a hundred and only four hundred of the original seven hundred acres of Royal Park are left.")



Charles Joseph La Trobe, 1801-1875, artist
Ben Nevis, Pyrenees, 1853

Sepia wash on paper

Collection: National Trust of Australia (Victoria)

Deposited on long-term loan in the Pictures Collection, State Library Victoria
La Trobe, the Romantic, enjoyed from Ben Nevis the expansive view of Mount Elephant, the Grampians and the Murray plains (*Australian Notes*, p.218)

John Stuart Hepburn of Smeaton Hill

By Lorraine Finlay

Lorraine Finlay, a member of the La Trobe Society, is the former Volunteer Property Manager of La Trobe's Cottage and a graduate of Monash University in Visual Arts and History, with an MA in Australian Studies. The history of early Port Phillip and the era of Charles La Trobe's governorship and his legacy continue to be of special interest.

*I was never sea-sick, but had been for years sick of the sea, and was beginning to think seriously of turning settler.*¹

On 29 July 1853 Charles Joseph La Trobe, Lieutenant-Governor of Victoria, sent a circular letter to a number of settlers requesting information on their early experiences in the Port Phillip District of New South Wales. It would appear from the replies he received that he was particularly interested in learning of the settlers' interaction with the Indigenous people of the District.² One recipient of the circular was an early settler, John Stuart Hepburn³ (commonly known as 'Captain Hepburn'). Hepburn sent a reply to La Trobe in August 1853.⁴ He wrote, based on his memories, of his early life as a sea captain and subsequent change of occupation to become a 'squatter'⁵ on land he selected in 1838 in an area of the central highlands of the District. He named his landholding *Smeaton Hill*. (The Smeaton Estate near his birthplace in Scotland had belonged to the Hepburn family for 400 years.) As requested by La Trobe, his letter also included some references to his contact with Aboriginal people. John Hepburn commenced a journal in 1846 recording the day-to-day activities on his property. This journal, combined with the letter to La Trobe provides a personal perspective of his life as a pastoralist and a member of the squattocracy during the 1830s and 1840s.

Governor Bourke of New South Wales, concerned at settlers occupying crown land without authorisation, introduced an *Act to Restrain the Unauthorised Occupation of Crown Lands* (often referred to as the 'Squatters Act') in July 1836.⁶ This act also applied to those settlers arriving in the Port Phillip District. The regulations allowed graziers to obtain a licence to occupy crown land. However, the occupiers would not have permanency and they would have limited legal standing as leaseholders. Following Captain William Lonsdale's arrival in September 1836 to take up his role as Police Magistrate for the Port Phillip District, land commissioners were appointed. They were responsible for erecting landmarks to denote crown lands and boundaries, settle disputes and to issue licences.⁷

John Hepburn's 1853 letter to La Trobe related how he had been at sea for twenty-one years and served in all capacities from cabin boy to master. As master of a vessel on one voyage from England to Van Diemen's Land he had spoken with a passenger, John Gardiner, who he said was determined to leave Van Diemen's Land to try his luck as a pastoralist in New South Wales. Hepburn declared that he had been sick of the sea for years and was beginning to think seriously of becoming a settler.⁸ Within a few



Unknown photographer
John Stuart Hepburn
University of Melbourne Archives, BWP12104



Johnstone, O'Shannessy & Co
Elizabeth Hepburn (detail)
University of Melbourne Archives, BWP12106

months of Governor Bourke's 1836 Squatters Act, John Hepburn gave up his captaincy and joined John Gardiner and Joseph Hawdon on one of the first ventures to take cattle overland, starting from the Murrumbidgee River south of Sydney, to the Port Phillip District.

Hepburn was more of a spectator on the expedition with Gardiner and Hawdon and it provided him with a chance to discover whether he was suited to the life of a pastoralist. Hepburn experienced some mishaps on the journey south. He tumbled off his horse twice in the first eight miles and when crossing the Murray River his horse drowned and he was compelled to walk or ride in a dray when tired.⁹ (His lack of experience in riding a horse could be attributed to being restricted to walking the decks of ships for over twenty years.) By December 1836 they had reached the Mount Macedon Ranges, and from the top, with the aid of his glass (telescope) Hepburn saw in the distance a bay and a ship at anchor. The following day he arrived at the small township. He wrote that:

There were only a few huts in the settlement... One hut was occupied by a Mr Batman and one by Dr Thomson...; the other huts were only slabs stuck in the ground, forming a roof and covered with earth. One little wooden box, belonging to Strachan, stood where the Western Market is now, and the old Lamb Inn was building [being built], but

no accommodation was to be had for money.¹⁰

Hepburn returned to Sydney by boat and whilst waiting for his wife, Elizabeth, and their two children to arrive from London he spent time on a station learning about pastoral pursuits. He then acquired a flock of sheep, supplies, drays and bullocks, putting himself into considerable debt.¹¹ In January 1838 Hepburn and his family joined his partner William Coghill and Coghill's family and set out for Port Phillip retracing the route of his earlier journey. Hepburn had over a thousand sheep and had also secured ten assigned convict labourers to assist with moving them overland. The convicts were to carry out work as shepherds and do menial jobs on his intended property.¹² They arrived in the Central Highlands by March, but Hepburn discovered that a number of settlers had already taken up large areas of the country.¹³ His intention was to settle on land that was within 100 miles (160 kilometres) of the settlement: the township of Melbourne. By 15 April he had selected approximately 25,000 acres (10,117 hectares),¹⁴ and named his property *Smeaton Hill*. He wrote that the Aboriginal name for the land he occupied was *Koorootyngh*. Three months after selecting a run and upon payment of £5 John Hepburn was granted a squatting licence for one year. On his application he stated that he now had 2,000 sheep, 5 horses, 80 cattle, 13 male servants and two female servants.¹⁵ Today, part of what was his acreage is in close proximity to the towns of Smeaton, Daylesford



Charles Norton, 1826–1872, artist
Smeaton Hill, the station of Capt'n Hepburn, c.1846
 Watercolour on cream paper
 Pictures Collection, State Library Victoria, H88.21/43

and Hepburn Springs. Thomas Ham's *Map of the purchased & measured lands* (1849)¹⁶ indicates John Hepburn's home in the County of Talbot, just north of Bullarook and south-west of the Mount Macedon (Loddon) Aboriginal Protectorate at Lalgambook, sometimes referred to as Jim Crow, but later renamed Franklinford. He constructed a cottage consisting of five rooms to be the family's homestead,¹⁷ and in addition a number of huts to serve as outbuildings for his shepherds and farm labourers.

George Augustus Robinson, Chief Aboriginal Protector, visited *Smeaton Hill* in February 1840, accompanied by Edward Parker, Assistant Protector at the Loddon station. He wrote in his journal of being hospitably received and considered Captain Hepburn's run 'excepting Ebden's, the best regulated and laid out station in the district that I had had seen'. He noted that:

Captain Hepburn's house is large, 50 feet by 40 outside measure. Built of pisa [rammed earth and stone]. Very substantial out office of the same. A good deal of split rail fencing is done; there are several gardens and a large woolshed, substantially and well erected, also an excellent wool press (lever ditto). The best I have seen in the district. Slept at Hepburn's.¹⁸

The Chief Protector continued:

Captain Hepburn is cultivating murnong in his garden. Plants growing at Captain Hepburn's: carrots, peas, cabbage, cauliflower, beans, kale, turnips, beetroot, treefoil [*sic*, a legume], flowers of various kinds in all perfection.¹⁹

Considering that the Hepburns had settled on the land only twenty months previously, it appears to have been quite an achievement to have established a comfortable dwelling and to be self-sufficient in fresh food from an extensive kitchen garden.

John Hepburn related to La Trobe a few incidents regarding his early contact with Aboriginal people. He admitted that 'a hostile feeling did exist although much blame might be attached to my men'. On one occasion he said that after taking possession of *Smeaton Hill* his sheep and attendant shepherds were scattered across three different locations over his vast acreage. He spent three days alone searching for the flocks; on the final day after finding some of the sheep, but no shepherds in sight, he mounted guard overnight and 'began to feel a little hungry; but, as the sailor says, I took in a reef by tying my neckerchief round my body'. He finally located part of his missing flock, but discovered that one of the shepherds had been



Unknown photographer
Smeaton House, Smeaton, 2011
Ballarat Heritage Services, 04446

spearred by Aboriginal people during an attack on the sheep. In summing up he wrote that 'The number of sheep lost never exceeded ten on any occasion, and all the depredations were by natives belonging to other districts'; and that 'after all my residence amongst the natives I never learnt a word of their lingo. Nearly the whole of the tribe belonging to this district is dead.'²⁰ Hepburn's sombre comment on the fate of the local Indigenous population could be read as his acknowledgement of the impact the arrival of the early settlers had in the area.

Hepburn's letter of 1853 did not refer specifically to the work involved in the first years of establishing his run. However, he employed a young Scottish emigrant, James Butchart as an overseer at *Smeaton Hill* between 1840 and 1843. Butchart left a description of his life on the station during those years. His wage was £30 a year with rations and he boarded with the family in their home. It would appear from Butchart's account that Hepburn had prospered during the first years after making the transition from his life as a mariner to a pastoralist in the Port Phillip District. Butchart related that the colony was financially depressed but that in 1842 *Smeaton Hill* now possessed 9,000 sheep and 100 cattle and that 30 acres (12 hectares) of wheat were under cultivation. He wrote that one season's wool clip produced 10,000 fleeces from Hepburn's flocks which was then to be shipped from Geelong.²¹

Governor Gipps introduced changes to the squatters' licences in 1844. Amongst the new regulations was the imposition of an extra

£10 a year if their stations exceeded more than twenty square miles (5,180 hectares) and if the land held more than 4,000 sheep or 500 head of cattle. They would also have to take out an extra licence for any other holdings they occupied, even within the same district.²² John Hepburn attended a meeting in Melbourne on 6 June 1844 to protest at Governor Gipps' new regulations. The *Geelong Advertiser* reported that about one hundred squatters 'formed on horseback three deep in a line on the declivity of Batman's Hill, fronting Melbourne... the procession started about half past twelve o'clock and arrived at the Mechanics' Institution about one.' Speakers including Hepburn passed a number of resolutions objecting to the new imposts and claimed it was a tax and not rent. Further they needed longer leases to provide security of tenure. They were concerned that they had no legal rights to the land and that all of the monies raised from licences was being sent to Sydney.²³

John Hepburn began to keep a regular journal in August 1846.²⁴ All of his entries over the following five years began with a weather report (perhaps a habit he acquired maintaining a daily log as a ship's captain). The majority of his notes are a record of the day-to-day activities in running his property. Many entries are of supervising his workers and at times issues concerning absconding labourers. There are many references to the branding of cattle, yearly shearing of sheep, preparing wool bales to be taken by drays and shipped from Geelong; the ploughing of land to plant potatoes and wheat; the bringing in of hay, and the arrival



Unknown photographer
 Hepburn graves, Smeaton House, Smeaton, c.2016
 National Trust of Australia (Victoria)

of drays from Geelong with supplies, and visits to Melbourne in his gig. In August 1847 he recorded that he had started for Melbourne but the ‘gig broke down going through the forest (Bullarook). Got down safe’. A familiar entry to modern readers is on 23 February 1847 when he was very concerned with the hot weather and a north-easterly wind pushing raging fires close to his flocks of sheep. He employed all the shepherds and other men to assist in putting out the fires. The hot winds and fires continued to be a problem; however on 28 February he wrote ‘Cold winds from East. Fires put out’. Hepburn’s journal mentions a number of visitors to *Smeaton Hill* such as other settlers from the surrounding districts and Edward Grimes, the land commissioner, but surprisingly there is no entry of a visit from Charles La Trobe.

However, Charles Joseph La Trobe in his official role as Superintendent and later Lieutenant-Governor while on his many journeys throughout the Port Phillip District recorded five visits to the Hepburns at *Smeaton Hill* between 1843 and 1852. His visits were brief, as his intended destination was usually to the nearby Aboriginal Protectorate of Loddon. In December 1843 on an excursion with Sir John and Lady Franklin the party visited Edward Parker at the Loddon station, and then went on to *Smeaton Hill*: ‘Sir John’s faithful companion, J. Hepburn, a cousin of our host. Stayed a few hours only & then went on 8 or 10 miles & camped in the bush’.²⁵

Edward Parker’s young son Joseph, later in life, recounted an aspect of La Trobe’s visits to the protectorate that lay outside of his usual administrative responsibilities:

The Mission station was officially visited by the Governor (Sir Joseph Latrobe [*sic*]) four times a year. He always came early in the morning, and with brothers and myself, and a few others, we formed a party, headed by His Excellency, and all armed with waddies [sticks] would start out quail hunting. When the Governor had secured six or seven brace, he would return, and after lunch fasten his quail to his saddle, and resume his journey.²⁶

Following Governor Gipps departure in 1846, Governor FitzRoy proclaimed new rules for the occupation of crown land in 1847. This act gave more security of tenure whereby settlers could apply for a pre-emptive right to purchase land surrounding their homesteads. They were also offered the option of purchasing previously leased crown land under certain conditions.²⁷ Under the new regulations Hepburn purchased two separate lots of his formerly leased land: one of 471 acres and a second of 510 acres (totalling 397 hectares) at one pound an acre.²⁸ He then began the construction on his purchased allotments of a substantial home overlooking Bullarook Creek in September 1848. The architect was John Gill and the builder a

Mr Lake. Hepburn referred in his journal to carpenters, bricklayers and plasterers arriving from Melbourne and described the stages of their work over the next two years. Hepburn sourced stone from a local quarry, organised a kiln to produce bricks, arranged for timber to be felled in nearby forests to heat the kiln and also provide for interior joinery and shingles for the roof. The two-storey house with a single storey verandah enclosing the front and two sides was Colonial Georgian in style and completed by October 1850.

The move into more salubrious surroundings brought changes to the Hepburn family's domestic way of life. However within a year, even more dramatic changes were unfolding close to *Smeaton Hill*. One of John Hepburn's last entries in his journal for 1851 was on 3 November, when he noted that 'thousands of men were passing by his property all week to the gold diggings at Mt Alexander.' A correspondent for the *Argus* newspaper wrote a report on the diggings in November 1851. He travelled to Ballarat and then across country over a number of squatters' runs and proceeded to Captain Hepburn's. He described the property, 'and here the picturesque combines with the pastoral, and about the Captain's domicile Art has lent her aid to give the whole the appearance of an English gentleman's park. It is, however, understood a Government township is immediately to be surveyed and sold, close to the Captain's house.'²⁹

Author William Howitt spent two years in Victoria from 1852 to 1854. Upon returning to England he published a book based on his experiences in the colony. Passing by the Hepburn property he was as impressed as the *Argus* correspondent and recorded his observations of *Smeaton Hill* (with a hint of sarcasm):

Captain Hepburn, who was originally master of a merchant-vessel, certainly made a happy exchange from ploughing the sea to grazing the Crown lands of Victoria. He has not only a noble house there, but it stands in as fine a situation as man could desire. Backed by the woods, with scores of miles of those beautiful downs spreading around him, and, in full view from his windows, the noble, verdant height of Mount Smeaton, -few more delightful places of residence could be found.

We were informed that he had bought great quantities of land. Happy man to be a squatter, and enjoy 'pre-emptive right'. When will a digger find a nugget so large that he will be able to buy large tracts at £1 per acre?³⁰

The New South Wales Squatters Act of 1836, which allowed early settlers to lease large tracts of land, gave John Hepburn a distinct advantage in developing his pastoral enterprise. The gradual introduction, over the following twenty years, of pre-emptive rights for pastoralists to purchase crown land gave him extra advantages. His financial situation was such that in 1856 he was able to buy the remaining thousands of acres of leased crown land.³¹

John Hepburn died on 7 August 1860. An obituary gave a summary of his eventful life. It included comments that, 'In the course of time Captain Hepburn had become wealthy, and at almost every successive sale of Crown lands large tracts of splendid country became his by purchase', and 'The bringing-up and education of a large family went on simultaneously with the superintendence of an extensive run.'³² He also served as a district magistrate and was chairman of the roads board. Facets of John Hepburn's personality can be inferred from his letter to La Trobe and entries in his journal. He was adventurous, energetic and appeared to thrive on the physical demands of running a large rural property. He had a 'no nonsense' approach to supervising his workers, no doubt from skills acquired from his years of experience as a ship's captain. From several anecdotes and amusing comments that he related we can see that he also possessed a degree of tolerance and was good humoured.

Ownership of the house and land remained in the family until the sale of the estate in October 1887. The majority of John Hepburn's original acreage was then sub-divided and resold. One purchaser bought the house and the surrounding 700 acres (283 hectares) of land.³³ *Smeaton House* still stands today and is a listed building with Heritage Victoria,³⁴ as is its associated cemetery that is under the stewardship of the National Trust of Australia (Victoria).³⁵ The family's name survives in the nearby towns of Smeaton and Hepburn Springs.

Endnotes

- 1 Thomas Francis Bride (ed.), *Letters from Victorian Pioneers: a series of papers on the early occupation of the colony, the Aborigines, etc., addressed by Victorian pioneers to His Excellency Charles Joseph La Trobe, Esq., Lieutenant-Governor of the Colony of Victoria*, Melbourne: Trustees of the Public Library, 1898, p.45.
- 2 Dianne Reilly, 'Letters from Victorian Pioneers to Governor La Trobe, 1853', *La Trobeana*, vol.17, no.1, March 2018, pp.40-54. When La Trobe left Melbourne in May 1854 and returned to England he took at least fifty-eight letters with him. In 1872 he sent the letters back to his friend and agent, James Graham, in Melbourne. The letters were lodged with the Melbourne Public Library, transcribed by the Librarian, Dr Thomas Francis Bride and published in 1898.
- 3 Born 1803 at Whitekirk, twenty-eight miles (45 km) east of Edinburgh, in East Lothian, Scotland.
- 4 Bride, pp.43-64.
- 5 A 'squatter' was a pastoralist who occupied vacant Crown land without authority. However, by the mid-1830s the term was applied to those who occupied Crown land under licence or lease, prior to eventually purchasing it. David Denholm, 'Squatting', *The Oxford Companion to Australian History*, rev. ed., Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2001, p.605. John Hepburn referred to himself as a 'squatter', Bride, p.44.
- 6 *New South Wales Government Gazette*, 1 October 1836, p.745.
- 7 Bride, p.64. Hepburn wrote that he had 'disputes about boundaries settled... and in all cases without favour or affection to any party or parties'. As in Hepburn's case, prior to surveying, first settlers appear to have had an understanding or agreement about what constituted their respective boundaries. Peter Snodgrass was the first Land Commissioner. By 1839 Henry Fyshe Gisborne was appointed to the role. In 1840 commissioners were appointed for the two districts of Port Phillip: Western Port and Portland Bay. In 1843 four extra districts were created and by 1846 the district of Wimmera was added.
- 8 *Ibid.*, p.45.
- 9 Hepburn described some of the hazards of the journey: 'I tumbled twice off my horse in the first eight miles, very much to the amusement of my fellow travellers... [In crossing the Murray River] We got the cattle across with a great deal of trouble, tied the tarpaulin round the body of our dray after the wheels were taken off, and got all safe across, taking a little of the load at a time. In getting the horses over, mine was drowned. This was a serious loss that could not be replaced for love or money... I was compelled to walk, or ride on the dray when tired. We kept the Major's [Mitchell] track for the whole of the next three weeks', pp.46-47.
- 10 *Ibid.*, p.48. 'There were several horses and fifteen head of cattle in the settlement.'
- 11 *Ibid.*, p.51: 'However, I paid all in time with interest, so I may safely say I never fingered one shilling I could call my own for nearly ten years, but after the debt was paid I found I could not save much money for a long time. I suppose the rigid economy was relaxed, and my family increased my expenses.'
- 12 *Ibid.*, p.64. Hepburn wrote that he had many old prisoners in his service and found them very good servants. The Pentonvilles (Exiles) were the worst without exception.
- 13 *Ibid.*, p.53. Hepburn referred to A. Mollison, C.H. Ebdon, Captain Brown, Harrison and Bowman as having already taken up land in his intended destination to establish a run.
- 14 Edward Wilson, *The Squatters' Directory: containing a list of all occupants of crown lands in the intermediate and unsettled districts of Port Phillip*, Melbourne: Edward Wilson, 1849, p.11. John Hepburn is listed as an occupant of Smeaton Hill in the Western Port Commissioner's District, with an estimated 25,000 acres and grazing 20,000 sheep.
- 15 *Historical Records of Victoria*, Vol. 6, *The Crown the Land and the Squatter 1835-1840*, edited by Michael Cannon and Ian Macfarlane, Melbourne: Victorian Government Printing Office, 1991, p.142.
- 16 Thomas Ham, *Map of the purchased & measured lands, counties, parishes, etc. of the Melbourne & Geelong districts*, carefully compiled from maps in the Survey Office Port Phillip, respectfully inscribed with permission to His Honor C. J. La Trobe Esq, Superintendent of Port Phillip, Melbourne: Thomas Ham, 1849.
- 1717 Smeaton House, Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number H0286, Heritage Overlay Number H070, *Victorian Government Gazette*, No.100, 9 October 1974, p.3,649.
- 18 Ian D. Clark (ed.), *The Journals of George Augustus Robinson, Chief Protector, Port Phillip Aboriginal Protectorate*, 2nd edition, Vol. 1: 1 January 1839-30 September 1840, Ballarat: Heritage Matters, 2000, p.160.
- 19 *Ibid.* (Murnong is a white native tuberous root. It can be eaten raw or baked. Robinson noted that Hepburn had seen thirty Aboriginal women on the plains digging for murnong and baking it in their native ovens or fireplaces, p.170.)
- 20 Bride, pp.56-61.
- 21 Lucille M. Quinlan, *Here My Home: the life and times of Captain John Stuart Hepburn, 1803-1860, master mariner, overlander and founder of Smeaton Hill, Victoria*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1967, pp.104-108. Note: Butchart later prospered and settled at Schnapper Point (Mornington) where in 1864 he built the elegant villa, *Beleura*, designed by architect Joseph Reed. (Pru J. Evans, Timeline for James Butchart and family at Beleura: research notes, Beleura House and Garden Archives, Mornington.)
- 22 Depasturing Licenses, *New South Wales Government Gazette*, 2 April 1844, p.508.
- 23 'The Great Melbourne Meeting,' *Geelong Advertiser*, 6 June 1844, p.3.
- 24 John Hepburn's station diaries, in Papers of the Hepburn family, Manuscript Collection, State Library Victoria, MS 9072 MSM 128 (Reel 1) Microfilm. See also Quinlan, extracts from the diary pp.124-133. Hepburn's own diaries cover the years 1846 to 1851; his overseer 'Mr Hunter' (whose identity could not be established) then maintained them from 1853 to c.1855.
- 25 Dianne Reilly (ed.), *Charles Joseph La Trobe: Australian Notes, 1839-1854*, Yarra Glen, Vic: Tarcoola Press, State Library of Victoria and Boz Publishing, 2006, pp.117-118. Sir John Franklin, Lieutenant-Governor of Van Diemen's Land from 1837-1843, was visiting Port Phillip with his wife prior to returning to England. John Hepburn was a naval officer who had travelled with Franklin on his first expedition to the Arctic between 1818 and 1822; he then accompanied the Franklins to Van Diemen's Land. He was staying with his cousin, John Stuart Hepburn, at *Smeaton Hill* at the time of the La Trobe and Franklins' visit.
- 26 'Boyish Recollections of Victoria Seventy-Seven Years Ago', *Mount Alexander Mail*, 23 June 1916, p.4. Joseph Parker's childhood memories of the number of visits by La Trobe seem be incorrect. There is no record of La Trobe visiting four times a year to the Loddon protectorate.

- 27 'New Squatter Regulations', *Melbourne Argus*, 6 April 1847, p.2. In the 'Intermediate settled districts', the location of Hepburn's station, leases were offered for eight years, but, if not renewed, the land would be subject to sale by the government. Leases of eight years could also be subject to sale at the end of each year under certain conditions.
- 28 *Port Phillip Government Gazette*, No. 51, 20 December 1848, p.562. Hepburn continued leasing the remaining acres (see note 14).
- 29 'Mount Alexander Diggings', *Argus*, 11 November 1851, p.2.
- 30 William Howitt, *Land, Labour and Gold: Or, Two Years in Victoria, with visits to Sydney and Van Diemen's Land*, Vol.2, London: Longman, Brown, Green and Roberts, 1858, p.179.
- 31 *Victorian Government Gazette*, No. 156, 5 December 1856, p.2083.
- 32 'Death of Captain John Hepburn', *Mount Alexander Mail*, 13 August 1860, p.2. Elizabeth Hepburn gave birth to ten children, nine of whom survived into adulthood (Quinlan, p.196).
- 33 *Ballarat Star*, 22 October 1887, p.4, and 15 December 1887, p.2; *Argus*, 15 December 1887, p.8.
- 34 Smeaton House, Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number H0286, Heritage Overlay Number H070.
- 35 Hepburn Graves, Smeaton House, Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number H0287. (John Stevens, a convict sentenced at seventeen for poaching who worked all his life as a gardener at *Smeaton Hill*, is buried in the family cemetery, Quinlan, p.195.)



George Alexander Gilbert, 1815–1877, artist
Banyule House, Heidelberg. The residence of Joseph Hawdon Esq., c.1849
Pencil and chinese white on tinted paper
Pictures Collection, State Library Victoria, H6638

Banyule: one of Melbourne's earliest homesteads

By Tim Gatehouse

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During Charles La Trobe's term of office the *Banyule* estate at Heidelberg was regarded as one of the finest properties in the vicinity of Melbourne. It is not known whether La Trobe visited it, but it is likely as he was a frequent visitor to *Charterisville*, the neighbouring estate owned by David Charteris McArthur.¹ In the first years after the settlement of Melbourne many prominent residents established estates at Heidelberg, attracted by its natural beauty, the views across the Yarra River to the Dandenong Ranges and the fertility of the soil. The controversial Judge Willis was a neighbour. He would have been able to see *Banyule* from his own house.²

In 1838 the country around Heidelberg was surveyed for sale. The auction took place at Sydney, and so it is not surprising that most of the purchasers were speculators from New South Wales.³ Portion 6 of the land sold was purchased by Richard Henry Browne, a pastoralist from Yass. He paid £1,334 for 920 acres (372 hectares) of which the Yarra River formed the southern boundary.⁴ He named it *Heidelberg* after a supposed resemblance to the countryside near the German city of the same name on the Neckar River which he visited on his Continental Grand Tour.⁵ He was accordingly dubbed 'Continental Browne' to distinguish him from others of the same name. Browne kept the land for less than a year,

subdividing it in 1839 into four narrow blocks each having a river frontage. From west to east the blocks were purchased by William Verner, the Chief Commissioner of Insolvent Estates, Joseph Hawdon, Arthur Hogue, a Melbourne merchant, and James Williamson, an overlander from New South Wales.⁶

Joseph Hawdon was born in 1813 at Staindrop, a small village near Walkerfield in County Durham. He was the fourth son of John Hawdon and Elizabeth Hunt.⁷ The Hawdon family had been farming in the area for several generations. Joseph Hawdon's brother John (1799-1853) emigrated to New South Wales in 1825.⁸ In 1831 he received a land grant at Moruya of 2,560 acres (1,035 hectares) which he named *Kiora* and by 1839 had built a substantial stone homestead there. At John's suggestion Joseph emigrated in 1834 and settled nearby on a property named *Strathallan*. The brothers collaborated in breeding cattle, and it was from here that in 1836 Joseph Hawdon, John Gardiner — a pastoralist who had originally emigrated to Van Diemen's Land — and John Hepburn, a ship's captain and pastoralist, brought the first cattle overland to Port Phillip. Here they established themselves as pastoralists. Hawdon took up licences for stations at Dandenong, Sunday Creek and Tallarook. In 1837 he repeated his overlanding feat when with Charles Bonney and Charles Campbell he drove 300 cattle from Goulburn to Adelaide. In 1838 he inaugurated the first mail service between Melbourne and Yass. Hawdon soon became part of the small world of Melbourne society, serving on the committees of the Port Phillip Turf Club, the Pastoral and Agricultural Society of Australia Felix and the Melbourne Club.⁹ In 1839 he emulated others in similar positions by purchasing one of the blocks into which R.H. Browne's *Heidelberg* estate had been subdivided.

Hawdon paid £1,550 for 279 acres (112 hectares) with a river frontage.¹⁰ The adjoining block to the east which had been purchased by Arthur Hogue comprised 264 acres (106 hectares). Hogue named it *Banyule* (supposedly derived from the Wurundjeri-willam people's word 'Banool', for hill) and built a small verandahed stone cottage on the highest point. Hogue became a victim of the early 1840s depression and in 1843 sold the property to Hawdon who moved into the cottage, retaining the name Hogue had given it. Prior to 1845 William Verner who had purchased the land on Hawdon's western boundary sold 100 acres (40 hectares) to a farmer named George Sullivan Greenaway. In 1845 Verner sold the remaining 114 acres (46 hectares) to Hawdon and another Heidelberg landowner John Satterthwaite Bolden, a former Church of England clergyman



Unknown artist
Joseph Hawdon, c.1836
Photograph of portrait
Pictorial Collection, State Library
of South Australia, B7389

who pursued farming with his brothers while living at Port Phillip. Hawdon subsequently purchased Bolden's interest in the land, bringing the *Banyule* estate to 657 acres (265 hectares).¹¹

On a visit to England in 1842 Hawdon married Emma Outhwaite at Durham. They had four children, Emma Josephine born in 1843, Arthur Joseph in 1844, Cyril Goodricke in 1846 and Alice in 1850.¹² By the beginning of 1848 he had built a larger house onto the front of Hogue's cottage which was retained as the service wing. The new house was designed by architect John Gill (1797-1866). Gill was born in Devon in 1797 and arrived in Melbourne in 1842. His home was a meeting place for architects, artists and poets. Gill had a diverse practice which included the design of houses, churches and commercial buildings. Unlike most of Gill's buildings, which were designed in a Regency classical style, *Banyule* was loosely Tudor Gothic Revival with a touch of the pattern book in appearance. The change from Gill's usual style may have been at Hawdon's insistence. Solidly constructed on sandstone foundations, its brick walls 30 inches (75 centimetres) thick were cement rendered, the roof slated, and its timbers pegged, no nails being used in the basic construction. Hawdon retained forty acres surrounding the house as parkland and gardens and divided the remainder into six tenanted farms. With its ornate chimneys,



Alexander Weynton, b.1827,
 artist, attrib.
 Banyule, c.1848-49
 Watercolour
 Collection: Rosemary Simpson

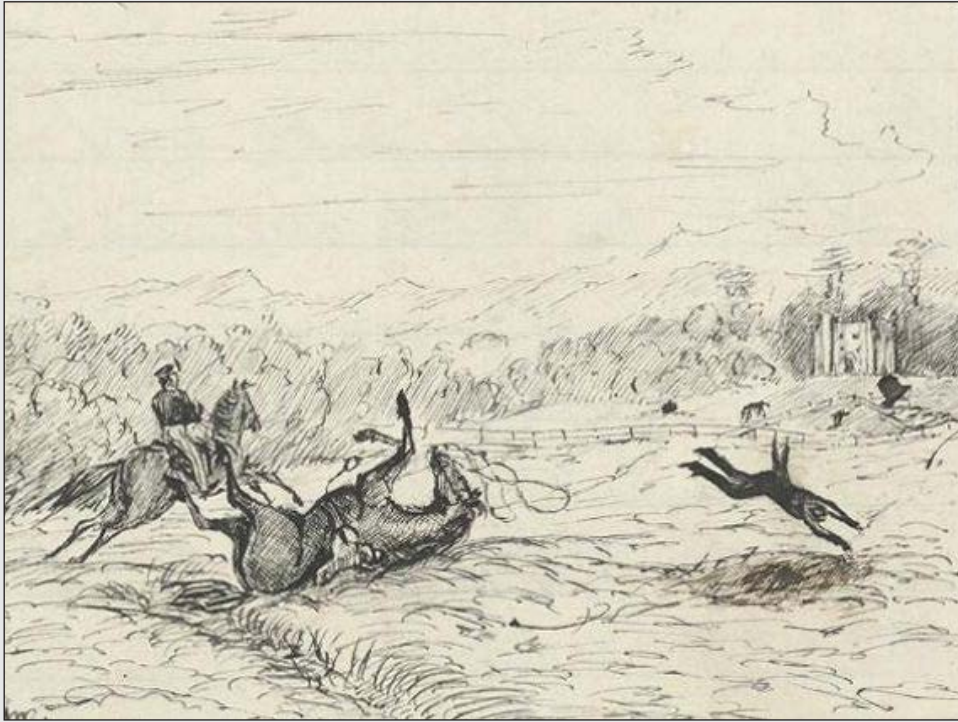
gables, pinnacles and picturesque setting *Banyule* became a local landmark and was regarded as one of the finest mansions in the colony.¹³

The house and estate were described in the diary of Alexander Weynton, the third officer of the *Stag*, the ship which brought Bishop Charles Perry to Melbourne in 1848. One of the other passengers was Robert Outhwaite the twenty-year-old brother-in-law of Joseph Hawdon, who was emigrating to Port Phillip to join Hawdon in his pastoral ventures. Outhwaite and Weynton struck up a friendship during the voyage. On arriving in Melbourne Outhwaite initially lived at *Banyule* with the Hawdons who invited Weynton to visit them while the *Stag* was still in port. On 11 February 1848 Weynton recorded in his diary:

His house is the finest within 50 miles of Melbourne. It is a splendid mansion and much resembles those of the residences in the Isle of Wight, surrounded by flower and fruit gardens, the Yarra Yarra winding gracefully through the grounds, tall trees of all descriptions giving on its banks and shading the stream. I have seldom seen so pretty a piece of scenery... In front of the house is an extensive lawn leading down to the fruit garden by a path very tastefully laid out.¹⁴

Weynton painted a water-colour of the *Stag* for Robert Outhwaite and either on this occasion or in the following year recorded the appearance of *Banyule* in another painting. He was an accomplished artist, most of his work being small, finely detailed paintings of ships

at sea or in port with which he illustrated his diary. The *Stag* left Melbourne on 8 April 1848 but returned the following year. Weynton took the opportunity to visit some of the friends he made among the passengers on the earlier voyage. On 29 March 1849 his diary recorded that he and one of his fellow officers, Mr. Irwin, dined with Bishop and Mrs. Perry at *Jolimont* where they were living in the second dwelling on Superintendent La Trobe's estate pending the construction of Bishops court. He wrote that it was 'a very stiff affair' and neither of them enjoyed it. Having slept that night on four chairs in the coffee room of the Royal Hotel in Collins Street, Weynton and Irwin set off next day for a gallop around the racecourse at Flemington and then to 'a place called 'Heidelbergh [*sic*]' to visit another of the passengers from the previous voyage, Rev. Francis Hales, incumbent of the still incomplete St John's Church of England. At that date Hales was living in a house provided by Hawdon on the *Banyule* estate. As they approached the gate of *Banyule* at a 'neck breaking pace' Weynton's horse stumbled in a drain and he was thrown off, breaking an arm. He later drew a comic sketch of the incident in his diary with himself somersaulting in mid-air and in the background a castle-like structure which could only be *Banyule* house. The diary records that after being carried into the house he regained consciousness lying on the drawing-room sofa having his temples bathed with eau-de-cologne by Mrs Hawdon. A doctor was called to set the arm and the next day Joseph Hawdon drove him back to the ship in his gig.¹⁵ Given the stylistic similarities between the sketch in the diary of the riding accident and the unsigned painting there is a strong probability that Weynton painted it for the Hawdons in recognition of



**Alexander Weynton, b.1827, artist
Heidelberg, 1849**

Journals of Alexander Weynton, MS 7130, Volume 1, p.111,
Manuscripts Collection, National Library of Australia
Arriving at Banyule, 30 March 1849

The house may be seen on the right above Weynton in mid-air

their kindness to him. It depicts the house as it was before the additions of 1908. It sits on a hilltop with a terrace outside the drawing-room windows overlooking the river. In the foreground are a lady and two young children with an improbably domesticated-looking kangaroo, and the trees have more of an English than Australian appearance which suggest that the artist was unfamiliar with Australian fauna and flora. *Banyule* was also painted by John Skinner Prout in distant views, but his style does not match that of this painting.

In 1853 Emma Hawdon died, and Hawdon returned to England. He left *Tallarook* station and *Banyule* under the supervision of Hugh John Lecky Chambers (1821-1893). Chambers was born in Ireland and in 1839 emigrated with his family to New South Wales where his father David practised as a solicitor. Hugh Chambers was also a lawyer. He was declared bankrupt in Sydney in 1847 and in 1849 came to Melbourne where he established a legal practice and became well known in racing circles. In that year he married Margaret Hawdon, the daughter of Joseph Hawdon's brother John.¹⁶ Under the terms of his agreement with Hawdon, Chambers was authorised to spend part of the rent he paid for *Banyule* on improvements to

the estate. These included the construction of two gate-lodges, stables and other outbuildings. When Hawdon returned in 1856, he alleged that the amount spent was excessive and demanded recompense from Chambers. The issue was referred to two arbitrators, the banker David Charteris McArthur and Robert Outhwaite, Hawdon's brother-in-law. They decided that Chambers owed Hawdon over £1,000 and although Hawdon allowed him time to pay the dispute caused a permanent rift between them.¹⁷

Before returning to Victoria in 1856 Hawdon re-married, his wife being Mary McFarlan, the nineteen-year-old daughter of the vicar of St Mary's Church of England at Gainford, Durham, near Hawdon's birthplace at Staindrop. There were no children of this marriage. In 1857 the Hawdons returned to England where they leased *Kildale Hall*, an estate near Great Ayton in North Yorkshire.¹⁸ Here they remained until 1863 when Hawdon again emigrated, this time to the South Island of New Zealand.

In 1857 after the departure of Chambers and the return of the Hawdons to England *Banyule* was leased to William Henry Fancourt Mitchell (1811-1884).¹⁹ Mitchell was familiar

with Heidelberg as he had owned the nearby *Mount Eagle* estate since 1853 and sold it when he moved to *Banyule*. Mitchell was born at Leicester and emigrated to Hobart in 1833 where he was initially employed as a clerk in the office of the Executive Council. In 1842 he married Christina Templeton, the daughter of Janet Templeton, who in 1831 after the death of her husband Andrew, a Glasgow banker, had emigrated to Tasmania with her nine children, her sister Eliza and brother-in-law John Forlonge, bringing with them a flock of Saxon sheep. The two families subsequently settled on stations in New South Wales and Port Phillip.²⁰ The pastoral experience of his wife's family may have encouraged William to also venture into this field, for shortly after their marriage William and Christina crossed to Port Phillip where William acquired the leasehold of *Barfold* station at Kyneton. He was appointed a magistrate and subsequently an official nominee to the Legislative Council. After being appointed Chief Commissioner of Police in 1853 he reorganised the force and is credited with the suppression of bushranging in Victoria. His parliamentary career culminated in his election as President of the Legislative Council in 1870, a post he held until his death.²¹

After Mitchell left *Banyule* in 1861 James Graham (1819-1898) took over the tenancy and the management of Joseph Hawdon's business interests while Hawdon remained in England. Graham was a prominent Melbourne merchant, one of the few to survive the depression of the 1840s. Born in County Clare, Ireland, he gained commercial experience in banks in Scotland before emigrating to Sydney in 1839. From here he overlanded to Melbourne and established a branch office of the Sydney merchant Stuart Alexander Donaldson. He became a prominent member of Melbourne's commercial and social life and was a director of many commercial enterprises, banks and insurance companies.²² Scrupulously honest himself, he wrote scathingly of the dubious practices of other merchants and speculators.²³ In 1845 he married Mary Cobham, a niece of Andrew and Georgiana McCrae. An appointee to the first Legislative Council, he was so well regarded by La Trobe that he chose him as one of the three trustees to look after his financial affairs in Victoria when he returned to Britain in 1854.

Graham remained at *Banyule* until 1865, when he purchased a house in South Yarra. Like other Heidelberg residents he found that the eighteen-mile return journey to Melbourne over poor roads that were often impassable after heavy rain²⁴ was not compensated by the beauty of the area when other salubrious locations closer to Melbourne were available. Graham had to

carry out many repairs during his tenancy.²⁵ He was also exasperated by Hawdon's behaviour when severe floods ruined the tenant farmers on *Banyule* making the rents impossible to collect. In contrast to the care he took of the injured Alexander Weynton, Hawdon showed no sympathy for the farmers' plight and ignored Graham's urgent pleas to come to *Banyule* from New Zealand where he now lived in order to resolve the problems or to give Graham any guidance in doing so.²⁶ Despite this period of ill-feeling Graham continued to manage Hawdon's business affairs in Victoria and later his deceased estate. After Graham left *Banyule* Hawdon put it on the market but could not find a buyer until 1867 when it was sold to Dr Robert Martin for £7,500, Graham continuing to manage it on Martin's behalf.²⁷

Hawdon never returned to Victoria after settling in New Zealand in 1863. Having considerable capital he established two stations, *Grassmere* and *Craigieburn*, in the high country of the South Island and lived on a suburban estate in Christchurch. In 1866 he became a member of the Canterbury Provincial Council. Hawdon died in 1871 and was buried in the cemetery of St Peter's Church of England at Upper Riccarton.

Robert Martin (1798-1874) was born on the Isle of Skye and qualified as a doctor before emigrating to New South Wales. In 1839 he overlanded to Port Phillip where he concentrated on pastoral pursuits taking up the licences of *Mount Sturgeon* and *Acheron* stations. In 1842 Martin purchased the property to the east of *Banyule* which had been purchased by James Williamson from R.H. Browne in 1839.²⁸ Williamson was forced to sell the 192-acre property which he had named *Viewbank* to cover his losses in the depression. The prefabricated house built by Williamson in 1840 and extended by Martin in brick and stone was demolished in the 1920s. Dr Martin had an irascible nature, and it was indicative of James Graham's tact that he not only managed Martin's business affairs but also mediated in the Martin family's quarrels. He intervened on behalf of two of Martin's five daughters to obtain his consent to their marriages: Lucy to Captain John Theodore Boyd, Military Secretary to the Governor, after they had already eloped, from whom the Boyd family of artists is descended; and Edith to William Bradley, Master of HMS *Galatea*, the ship captained by Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, on his visit to Australia in 1868.²⁹

After purchasing *Banyule* Martin also purchased the 100-acre block in the north-west corner which William Verner had sold to George Greenaway. He spent a considerable



Tim Gatehouse, photographer
Banyule, 2021

sum repairing the house, lodges, tenants' houses and fences but, as a reflection of the backwater which Heidelberg had become, he was unable to find a tenant even after these improvements had been made apart from a short tenancy in 1872 of Rev. Duncan Fraser, the Presbyterian minister at Heidelberg. It was not until 1874 that the problem of occupancy was resolved when James Graham's daughter Mary (Minnie) married Martin's only son Robert William Kirby Martin, an English-educated solicitor.

Charles Albert La Trobe — 'Charlie', son of Charles Joseph La Trobe — was a house guest at *Banyule* later that year.³⁰ His planned visit to Australia was to have included attendance at Minnie's wedding, but much to her disappointment he did not arrive in time for the nuptials.

After his son's death in 1878, Dr Martin settled *Banyule* on Minnie. She and Robert had two daughters, Mary Lucy Martin and Edith Maude Martin. They lived at *Banyule* until Robert died in 1878 and Minnie in 1889. *Banyule* was left in trust to their two daughters. After Lucy died in 1892 Edith became the sole beneficiary and moved to England. Coming of age in 1898 she became the owner of *Banyule* and in this year married a British army officer Henry Percy Rhind Warren. After a brief visit to Victoria the following year Edith returned to England and James Graham's sons who had taken over their father's firm continued to

manage *Banyule* into the twentieth century. The tenancy problems continued during this period due not only to the isolation of Heidelberg but also to the depression which followed the land boom of the 1880s. *Banyule* was offered for rent in 1891 but was not let until 1893 when Mrs Margaret McCracken became the tenant. Her hurried departure in 1898 owing two years' rent may have been due not only to the depressed economy but to the violence of her husband, as revealed in their divorce proceedings in 1901. During this period the rents of the tenanted farms were also difficult to collect.³¹

In 1903 *Banyule* was leased to Charles Gordon Lyon (known as Gordon Lyon, 1867-1958). He was born at South Yarra, the son of Charles Hugh Lyon, the owner of *Ballanee* station at Ballan and Juliet Vivien Anderson, the daughter of Colonel Joseph Anderson, a former commandant of Norfolk Island and with his brother a part-owner of *Mangalore* station on the Goulburn River.³² Gordon Lyon studied chemistry, mineralogy and assaying at the University of Melbourne and in 1886 went into partnership with Everard Brown, a son of Thomas Alexander Brown (Rolf Boldrewood) in mining ventures at Broken Hill and Zeehan in Tasmania. In 1892 a partnership of Gordon Lyon, Everard Brown and Everard's uncle Sylvester Brown, (a brother of Thomas Alexander Brown) purchased the Bayley's Reward mine at Coolgardie from which substantial profits were made. Lyon invested widely in Western

Australian mines and was a major benefactor of the town of Coolgardie.³³ In 1900 he married Evelyn Queenie Calvert (1875-1970) the daughter of John Calvert and Margaret Fair Chirnside of *Irrewarra* station near Colac.

By 1907 the Lyons, now with three children, considered the *Banyule* house was not large enough for their needs. Edith Maude Warren (née Martin) then living in England and still the owner of *Banyule* consented to additions being made in a style sympathetic to the existing building. These were completed in 1908 to the design of architects Klingender & Alsop at the cost of £1,385. The south side of the house was extended eastwards on both storeys, the dining room was enlarged by removing the wall between it and the gun room and extra fireplaces were installed.³⁴ During Lyon's tenancy a renowned Jersey dairy stud was raised on the farmland surrounding the house. In 1926 the northern portion of the estate was sold, reducing its size from 657 to 326 acres (265 to 131 hectares).

When Gordon Lyon's tenancy ended in 1938 *Banyule* was leased to a farming enterprise called the Banyule Stud Limited. The condition of the house deteriorated during this period and by the time Mrs Warren died in 1942 and *Banyule* was sold, the house was uninhabitable. The new owners Herbert and Eleah Allen had to replace floors, windows and roof slates and install plumbing and lighting. In 1954 more land was sold to the Department of Education for the

construction of a new primary school, reducing the property to 270 acres (109 hectares).

By 1958 the ever-increasing sprawl of Melbourne had extended to the north-east and amidst much controversy over the despoliation of the Yarra Valley *Banyule* was sold to a property development company, Stanhill Pty Ltd, which transformed most of the farmland into a suburb named after the estate. The house remained on two-and-a-half acres (one hectare) on the hill-top, overlooking the river flats on the east. It remained vacant from 1958 to 1963 when it was purchased by Robert and Rosemary Simpson. The painting by Alexander Weynton was still in the house and it was a condition of the sale that it remained so.³⁵ The Simpsons carried out extensive renovations to the property. In 1974 *Banyule* was sold to the Victorian Government to display the National Gallery of Victoria's collection of Australian Impressionist paintings, but when it was found to be an impractical location in which to house them it was sold again into private hands.

Although the approach to *Banyule* is now through suburban streets, seen from the river flats the house has much the same appearance as depicted in Alexander Weynton's painting of the late 1840s, albeit with Gordon Lyon's 1908 addition which merges seamlessly with Gill's original building. Few buildings from La Trobe's era have to this extent retained the settings in which they were built.

Acknowledgement

My thanks to Mrs Rosemary Simpson for her reminiscences of *Banyule* during the period of her family's ownership.

Endnotes

- 1 Tim Gatehouse "'Charterisville": the home of David Charteris McArthur', *La Trobeana*, vol.20, no 1, March 2021, pp.39-44.
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- 3 Donald S. Garden, *Heidelberg: the land and its people, 1838-1900*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1972, p.8.
- 4 *Ibid*, p.10.
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- 7 Paul de Serville, *Pounds and Pedigrees: the upper class in Victoria 1850-80*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press Australia, 1991, p.303.
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- 14 Retrospective Journal of Alexander Weynton, Manuscripts Collection, National Library of Australia, Canberra, Reference Number 7130, Entry dated 11 February 1848.
- 15 Weynton, Journal, entry dated 29 March 1849.
- 16 De Serville, *Pounds and Pedigrees*, p.381.
- 17 Garden, p.89.
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- 25 Ibid, pp.231, 243, 370 (9 April 1864: 'roof is now in a dreadfully leaky state').
- 26 Ibid, pp.269, 345, 365.
- 27 Strahan, p.129.
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- 29 Brenda Niall, *Martin Boyd, a life*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1990, pp.31-32.
- 30 James Graham to Charles Joseph La Trobe, 20 April, 10 November and 2 December 1874, University of Melbourne Archives, Graham Bros collection 1961.0014, unit 56, Private letter book 8. (For extracts, see <https://www.latrobesociety.org.au/documents/LaTrobeCAletters.pdf>.)
- 31 Garden, pp.178-179.
- 32 Billis and Kenyon, pp.99, 97.
- 33 Warren Bert Kimberly, *History of West Australia: a narrative of her best, together with biographies for her leading men*, Melbourne: Niven, 1897, p.230.
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- 35 Communication from Mrs Rosemary Simpson.

Forthcoming events

MARCH

Sunday 20

La Trobe's Birthday Celebration

Time: 4.30-6.30 pm

Venue: La Trobe's Cottage Garden

Speaker: Helen Botham, Coordinator,
La Trobe's Cottage Management Team

Topic: La Trobe's Plant-Hunting

Endeavours, followed by an informal tour of the Cottage garden, highlighting new plantings in light of the recent discovery of La Trobe's 1851 order from Macarthur's Camden Nursery.

Sparkling wine and birthday cake

Admission: \$15 per person

APRIL

Tuesday 5

Joint La Trobe Society/RHSV

AGL Shaw Lecture

Time: 5.30-7.30 pm

Venue: Royal Historical Society of Victoria, Cnr William and A'Beckett Streets, Melbourne

Speaker: Dr Peter Yule FRHSV, member of the RHSV Council, an Honorary Research Fellow in the School of Historical and Philosophical Studies, University of Melbourne, and La Trobe Society member.

Topic: The Barristers of the Port Phillip District, 1839-1851

Refreshments

Admission: \$35 per person

MAY

Wednesday 4

Friends of La Trobe's Cottage Annual Lecture

Time: 5.30-7.30 pm

Venue: Royal Historical Society of Victoria, Cnr William and A'Beckett Streets, Melbourne

Speaker: John Botham, La Trobe Society Webmaster

Topic: *The Lady of St Kilda*

La Trobe named St Kilda after this schooner, which had been named after a Scottish island. The talk explores this and other links with the island.

Refreshments

Admission: \$25 per person

AUGUST

Wednesday 3

La Trobe Society

Annual General Meeting and Dinner

Time: 6.30 pm

Venue: Lyceum Club, Ridgway Place, Melbourne

Guest Speaker: tba

Invitations will be sent to members

Bookings

For catering purposes, bookings are essential

Email: secretary@latrobesociety.org.au

Or phone Dianne Reilly on 9646 2112

(please leave a message)

or mobile 0412 517 061.

For the latest information on
upcoming events, please refer to
the Society's events page
www.latrobesociety.org.au/events

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Back issues of La Trobeana are available on the Society's website, except for the last issue.

The back issues may be accessed at www.latrobesociety.org.au/LaTrobeana

They may be searched by keyword.

Contributions welcome

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BACK COVER
La Trobe Family coat of arms

INSIDE FRONT COVER
Charles Joseph La Trobe's coat of arms,
taken from his bookplate

