



Newsletter No 58

16 February 2026

It's been an eventful couple of months since our last Newsletter.

The numbers of visitors on every Sunday in January exceeded almost all records! Numbers for the four Sundays were 19, 34, 20, 25 making an average of 25. We suspect that the opening of the Metrolink and the free travel on weekends brought many people to the park area and the weather was fine on each of these days.

School Holiday Fridays.

Much work had been done to prepare for our Friday morning openings scheduled for 9, 16 and 23 January. We hoped to encourage families to bring their children who were given free entry. A Cottage tour, tailored to children was prepared, and Lindy had put together quizzes, and traditional games and activities were available. Lindy's daughter Eleanor dressed as Sophie and engaged with the visitors, especially the children: her presence really set the scene for the morning. The opening on 9 January was cancelled due to extreme heat, but the other two days proceeded very successfully with the children and their parents enjoying all that was on offer. The visitor numbers, however, were lower than we would have liked. We are keen now to make use of this new range of resources for young visitors, and we considered opening on Fridays in the April school holidays. Thanks to the volunteers who offered to support this, but it seems we just don't have enough volunteers available to run the proposed days satisfactorily. We will aim to run the program in January 2027.



Sophie supervises the games



Friday volunteers

NTAV Volunteers Visit

Kate Drummond, NTAV Volunteer Manager, brought a group of NTAV volunteers to tour the Cottage today after their tour of Government House. We enjoyed showing our site to volunteers from other sites, many of whom knew little about it, and had never been.

Cottage Management Team					
Liaison	Helen Botham	0447 018224	Maintenance	Colin Mickleburgh	0423 114619
Curatorial	Karen Stewart	0406 501991	Publicity	Helen Armstrong	0427 925616
Education /Events	Lindy Golding	0423 034632	Volunteers	Helen Botham	0447 018224
Garden	Helen Botham	0447 018224	(Statistics	John Botham	0407 814008)
Housekeeping	Elizabeth Lee	0410 195 035			

Cocktail party

The Cottage garden was booked for a cocktail party on Monday 2 February in the late afternoon. The organiser sought the booking due to its central location, its size and the picket fence. The event, the launch of a software product, was a great success: about fifty people enjoyed the late afternoon sun, the pretty garden and the park surrounds, and from our point of view it demonstrated that the site can be put to a range of uses!



Guests listen in to the product launch

Great Mullein!

There have been a few enquiries about the amazing tall plant currently flowering near the back entrance door to the Cottage. This is a *Verbascum Thapsus*, Woolly Mullein or Great Mullein; it was a popular garden plant available from the Sydney Botanic Gardens from 1828 and from Camden Nursery from 1845. It is now an environmental weed, see https://www.sgln.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Great_Mullien.pdf widespread in Victoria, 'occurring on lands that were formerly cultivated, pastures, native grasslands, roadsides, the margins of watercourses and in neglected areas', We'll hope in this enclosed parkland it won't spread, and in the meantime it presents a sight in the garden La Trobe would have recognised.



Coming Events:

I will be getting in touch with volunteers soon to ask whether you'd like to come along to Labassa on Tuesday 3 March at 10am to view La Trobe's sword, which has been returned to the National Trust from State Library Victoria. Katie Potter, NTAV Collections Manager, has offered to show it to us, as well as the gold-plated trowel presented to La Trobe at the laying of the foundation stone of the Geelong Railway Terminus on 20 September 1853. This will be a session just for La Trobe's Cottage volunteers.

The La Trobe Society will be celebrating Charles La Trobe's 225th birthday on Sunday 22 March, 4.30–6.00 pm at the Cottage. You will be receiving an invitation to this event.

We have been asked to prepare a special display as part of NTAV's celebration of their 70th Anniversary during the Heritage Festival (18 April to 18 May). We plan a display of early photographs of La Trobe's Cottage leading up to the 1956 discussions which led to the acquisition by NTAV of the dining room – all that was left of the Cottage in 1956, the year NTAV was formed. We'll have these in place in time for the La Trobe Birthday celebration.

The Cottage Management Team thanks you, as always, for your support.